Linguistic Politeness Beyond Modernity. A Critical Reconsideration of Politeness Theories

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Linguistic politeness beyond modernity:

A critical reconsideration

of politeness theories

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by

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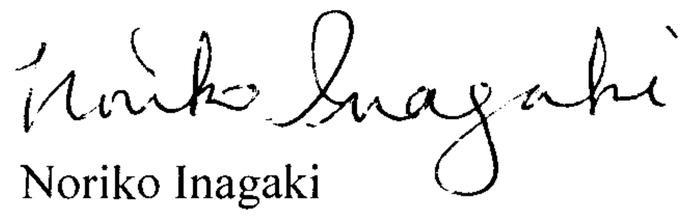

Noriko Inagaki

Abstract

Over the past three decades, politeness studies have attempted a scientific conceptualisation of politeness and have sought to establish a universal theory applicable to all cultures and languages. Recognising that the field has been influenced by modernist principles in theory construction, this dissertation engages in a critical reconsideration of politeness, setting it in the wider intellectual context of *modernity* and *post-modernity*. In the first half, it uncovers the assumptions underlying three major theories: Lakoff (1973, 1975), Leech (1983) and Brown & Levinson (1978[1987]). Lakoff and Leech's theories conceive of politeness as pragmatic rules/principles in a framework inherited from Saussurean structuralism. These represent a 'structure-centred approach', whereas B&L's theory can be seen as an 'agency-centred approach', concentrating on the actor (agency) and borrowing theoretical constructs from 'rational choice theory' – indeed B&L's "Model Person" is modernity's model of an 'autonomous' 'rational' 'calculative' self. But in late modern sociology, the longstanding structure/agency, theory/practice, mind/body, objectivism/subjectivism dichotomies have reached an epistemological deadlock, and politeness theories now face similar difficulties.

The dissertation then explores alternative ways of understanding politeness, unconstrained by modernist assumptions, and turns to Bourdieu, Goffman and Gadamer as 'thinking tools'. Bourdieu's 'theory of practice' helps to resolve structure/agency and other dichotomies, and his *habitus* provides a healthy alternative to B&L's politeness as 'rational calculative action'. However, Bourdieu's theory provides too limited a role for 'agency' in politeness, and here Goffman's socially constructed self in social interaction proves complementary. Lastly, modernist politeness theories assume that the Hearer's role is to reconstruct the Speaker's intentions passively and here Gadamer's hermeneutics, particularly his notions of 'prejudices' and 'horizons' illuminates a great deal of contingency which surrounds the Hearer, vital to a thorough evaluation of politeness.

Overall, the dissertation moves from a critique of modernist approaches to politeness towards a more viable post-modern reconstruction.

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During this phase, I had opportunities to attend a number of courses at different colleges within the University of London, e.g. pragmatics at University College London, applied and sociolinguistics at Birkbeck College, and linguistics and sociology/ anthropology at SOAS. I am particularly thankful to Dr. Trevor Marchand, who was my second supervisor at the time, for introducing me to the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu and helping me to see the topic from a new angle – how an anthropologist might look at the field of politeness. This opened my eyes to a much wider academic context. As the focus of my study eventually made a sociological turn, 'Theoretical Approaches to Social Anthropology' at SOAS was extremely helpful, as I was a total amateur in this field.

After my transfer to King's College, my two supervisors, Professor Ben Rampton and Dr. Alexandra Georgakopoulou have given me tremendous assistance in steering my work in right directions. Having seen that I had been unsettled by all the existing theories, they encouraged me to embark on a theoretical reconsideration. As a theoretical thesis, my project involved no data analysis. Instead it involved much thinking and more thinking! Both supervisors patiently read my intellectual scribbles again and again until what I initially felt only as 'strong intuitions' gradually matured into something that I could actually put into my thesis as 'arguments'. They helped me clarify my ideas at different stages with valuable and critical comments, as they

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Introduction

1. Context of the Problem

The study of politeness in language has attracted a number of researchers in pragmatics, anthropology, sociolinguistics, sociology, social psychology and other disciplines over the last three decades. Researchers, trying to avoid confusion with the ordinary everyday notion of politeness, i.e. "various ways in which polite behaviour is talked about by members of sociocultural groups" (Watts et al. 1992:3) endeavoured to develop a scientific conceptualisation of politeness. Watts et al. (1992:3-4) termed the common parlance usage 'first-order politeness' (politeness1) and the scientific analysis 'second-order politeness' (politeness2) and argued for the need to make a distinction between the two. Many researchers have attempted to establish a second-order politeness, i.e. a scientific or theoretical construct of politeness and moving on from there to produce a universal theory or framework for understanding politeness.

In 1990, Fraser (1990) identified four different views of politeness 1) the Conversational Maxim View (Lakoff 1973, 1975; Leech 1983), 2) the Conversational Contract View (Fraser and Nolen 1981), 3) the Face-Saving View (Brown & Levinson 1978 [1987]), and 4) the Social Norm View. More recently, Eelen (2001) in *A Critique of Politeness Theories*, examined nine different researchers who have contributed to the theoretical discussions of politeness: 1) Lakoff (1973, 1975) 2) Brown & Levinson (1987 [1978]), 3) Leech (1983), 4) Gu (1990), 5) Ide (1989), 6) Blum-Kulka (1987, 1992), 7) Fraser & Nolen (1981), 8) Arndt & Janney (1985, 1992) and 9) Watts (1989; 1992). Many would agree that it is Lakoff (1973), Leech (1983) and Brown & Levinson

(1987 [1978]) who have proposed grand systematic theories of politeness. Others on Eelen's list have contributed to the field by offering criticisms of these major theories[1], by attempting modifications of existing theories[2] or by expressing different views regarding some aspects of politeness.[3] This thesis takes **Lakoff** (1972), **Leech** (1983) and **Brown & Levinson** (1987 [1978]) as the main objects of investigation, but other relevant theorists' views are considered in the discussion. Terkourafi (2005:237) calls these three theories 'traditional' views of politeness because they have achieved the status of 'classics' in the field. Eelen (2001:23) considers these three theorists to be "the founding fathers of modern politeness research".

On the one hand, the field of politeness studies has flourished. There have been special issues focused on politeness in major linguistic journals (e.g. *Multilingua* 1989 Vol.9 Issues. 2/3; *Multilingua* 2004 Vol. 23 Issues 1/2; *Journal of Pragmatics* 2003 Vol.35 Issues 10/11; *Journal of Pragmatics* 2007 Vol. 39 Issue 4.) In 2005, the first journal specifically devoted to politeness studies, the *Journal of Politeness Research*, was launched. Watts (2003) counted roughly 1,200 titles in his bibliography of politeness and the list has been growing steadily ever since. Among them a number of works, particularly Ph.D. theses on politeness, have studied politeness empirically and

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[1] Ide (1989, 1999) criticised the emphasis on the strategic aspect of politeness, which is especially evident in B&L's theory. She argued that besides the strategic active choice of politeness based on 'volition', there is another aspect of politeness which is based on 'wakimae', which may be translated as 'discernment'; all speakers are expected to *discern* and acknowledge their sense of place in relation to both the situational context and social hierarchy (1999:445).

[2] Gu (1990) modified Leech's politeness maxims in the light of the Chinese context and stressed that his maxims are morally prescriptive in nature.

[3] Blum-Kulka (1992) reconsidered the question of universality. She attempted to "unveil the role of culture in negotiating perceptions of politeness (1992:255)" in the Israeli-Jewish context. Another contribution is her Post-Brown & Levinson empirical research in cross-cultural settings. Fraser & Nolen (Fraser and Nolen 1981, Fraser 1990) viewed politeness as a matter of keeping the terms and conditions of the conversational contract, which is less static and negotiable during conversation, but their view was built on Grice's Cooperative Principle in a general sense together with Goffman's notion of face (Fraser 1990:232). Arndt & Janney (1985, 1992) rejected the 'appropriacy based' approach and proposed 'emotive communication', the communication of transitory attitudes, feelings and other affective states (1985:282). They argue that only interpersonally supportive strategies constitute politeness because it acknowledges the hearer's interpersonal face needs. Their approach resembles Brown & Levinson's approach. Watts's (1989, 1992) major contribution may be his notion of 'politic behaviour'. In his later book (2003) Watts made alternative enquiries into politeness. I will discuss his social model of politeness (2003) in Chapter 4 as one of the postmodern approaches to politeness.

have made cross-cultural comparisons based on Brown & Levinson's (B&L's) most popular theory. On the other hand, although there have been many criticisms of current politeness theories including B&L's theory, there have been very few serious attempts at any alternative theoretical enquiry. The field has been flooded with an extraordinary number of articles without any major theoretical development. It is high time a serious reconsideration of politeness theories was launched.

In this context, Eelen's book *A Critique of Politeness Theories* (2001) was welcomed as heralding a new breed of politeness studies. Eelen's book was much appreciated by researchers like Watts.[4] As a consequence of Watts's reading Eelen's work, in 2002, Gino Eelen, Jim O'Driscoll and Richard Watts collaborated in holding a colloquium entitled "First-order and second-order politeness: the dispute over 'modelling' politeness" in the Sociolinguistics Symposium 14, which took place at the University of Ghent.[5] In this colloquium, Eelen presented a paper: "Conceptualising politeness: objectivism versus discursiveness". Watts proposed a 'discursive approach to linguistic politeness' in *Politeness* (2003), in which he was no longer aiming at establishing a second-order politeness (politeness2) or trying to devise a scientific notion of politeness. The focus moved to a dispute over first-order politeness (politeness1)[6], i.e. the participants' perceptions of politeness. Watts (2003), inspired by Eelen (2001), employed Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' in his new discursive approach. Mills in *Gender and Politeness* (2003) takes a similar approach, in which she employs Bourdieu's *habitus* in conjunction with Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of a

[4] Watts wrote in *Politeness* (2003:xii): "I was alone and adrift in an ocean of Brown-Levinson's empirical work on politeness and was desperately trying to find dry land and a friendly shore. I found the land I was looking for in 2001 when I read Gino Eelen's book *A Critique of Politeness Theories*."

[5] The colloquium abstract reads "The intention of this colloquium is to face the problem head-on by asking whether it might not be more fruitful to take first-order politeness not necessarily as the object of politeness theory but at least as the point from which new theoretical and methodological approaches to politeness should begin." It was taken from the symposium programme, which is available on http://users.ugent.be/~sslembro/colloquialist.html

[6] By discursive dispute over politeness1 Watts means determining whether an utterance is evaluated as polite or impolite, depends on the interpretation of that behaviour in overall social interaction, which is a first-order evaluation by the Hearer (Eelen2001:45; Watts 2003:8).

'community of practice'. My contention is that Eelen's work (2001) opened the possibility of alternative approaches to politeness no longer constrained by modern theoretical demands aimed at establishing an objective universal theory, though actually Eelen himself did not formulate his arguments in a *modernity–postmodernity* framework. Terkourafi (2005:237), however, rightly refers to Eelen (2001), Watts (2003), and Mills (2003) as holding 'post-modern' views of politeness, because all three rejected the dual premises of the 'traditional' views of modern politeness theories (Lakoff (1972), Leech (1983) and Brown & Levinson (1987 [1978]), i.e. "Grice's Cooperative Principle and speech act theory" (Terkourafi 2005:237) and substituted for them "an emphasis on participants' own perception of politeness (politeness1) and on the discursive struggle over politeness" (ibid.).

In the 2nd edition of *Politeness in Language: Studies in Its History, Theory and Practice (2005)*, Watts (2005) added a newly written article, "Linguistic politeness research: *quo vadis*?", in which he looked retrospectively at all the contributions in the original 1992 edition. Watts then recognised that "all of these criticisms, suggestions and hypotheses, some of them tentative, others forceful, point towards radical new ways of thinking about linguistic politeness" (Watts 2005: xiii) and that "they reveal – with hindsight – the first tentative signs of *postmodernist* thinking about politeness" (ibid.).[7] In this article, Watts highlights this, using quotations from different authors in the 1992 book and pointing out that "many of the contributions begin to sound out the feasibility of bottom-up discursive approaches which will ultimately lead to a new, postmodernist view of politeness" (ibid.:xxx). This article by Watts illustrates the current state-of-the-art theoretical discussions of politeness.

[7] Watts (2005:xvii) quotes Scannell (1998:262), who pointed out that the *modernist* approach to the study of language is "to establish language as an object of knowledge only by uncoupling it from praxis and being", and argues that a *postmodernist* view would see things the other way round. (ibid. xviii).

2. Need for this study

As mentioned above, new attempts to develop alternative approaches to politeness have only recently begun and are still at a very early stage. There is thus still a great need for further theoretical investigation. Eelen (2001) pointed out various epistemological problems of the major politeness theories, but he did not explicitly attribute these problems directly to the theoretical assumptions underlying modern academic disciplines. It is my contention that all these major politeness theories have been influenced by *modernist* principles that lie behind their theory construction. Therefore it is necessary, first of all, to uncover the underlying theoretical assumptions which have constrained theory construction and perspectives. This thesis acknowledges the contributions of Eelen (2001), Watts (2003) and Mills (2003) in their exploration of an alternative approach to politeness, but takes as its point of departure the necessity of laying a theoretical foundation for *postmodern* approaches as an urgent priority in the field of politeness studies.

3. Understanding of 'modernism' in this thesis

As the theoretical thrust of this thesis is an evaluation of *modernist* principles in theory construction, I will briefly present my understanding of *modernism* in this Introduction to my thesis. The topic will be further discussed in Chapter 3 and in the Conclusion.

The idea of *modernism* or *modernist* thinking takes different forms in different contexts, but its roots date back to the Enlightenment, which is characterised by 'rationality' and 'objectivity'.[8] Descartes, through the dictum *Cogito ergo sum* ('I think, therefore I am'), provided a new foundation for philosophy by elevating the 'thinking

[8] The 'modern' era is usually associated with the European Enlightenment, which begins roughly in the middle of the eighteenth century (Klages 2003). I consider 'modernism' to be the philosophical and epistemological ideas or bases which characterise the 'modern' era. I am using 'modernist' as an adjective form of 'modernism'.

self' to the centre of the world, while Newton provided the scientific framework for modernity by seeing the physical world as a machine, the laws and regularity of which could be discerned by the human mind. *Modernis*t thinking assumes that knowledge is certain and objective and that the modern knower, who is an 'autonomous rational subject', claims to have access to neutral dispassionate knowledge from a vantage point outside the flux of history (Grenz 1996:2-4). In the academic context, *modernist* researchers believed in the unity of the scientific method, taking natural science to be the model for all sciences (Dow 1992:142; Delanty 1997:12). It was assumed that reality can be reduced to observable units and that it can be neutrally and objectively observed (Delanty 1997:12). They also endeavoured to search for universal theories, independent of history and context (Dow 1992:149). The knowledge or 'truth' produced by scientific rationality is expected to lead toward progress (Dow 1992:149; Klages 2003).

Grenz (1996:68-70) lists 'reason' 'autonomy', 'nature', 'harmony' and 'progress' as principles of the Enlightenment. Enlightenment thinkers assumed that the universe possesses an overarching order and harmony. Autonomous human reason became the arbiter of truth having the confidence to understand the foundational order of the universe, governed by the laws of nature. These Enlightenment principles became the basic tenets of *modernist* thinking.

4. Aim of this study and methodology

The aim of this dissertation is a critical reconsideration of linguistic politeness, setting politeness theories into the wider intellectual context of *modernist* thinking and its associated problems. **Part I (Chapter 1, 2, 3)** of this thesis will provide a critique of *modernist* approaches to politeness, represented by **Lakoff** (1973, 1975) and **Leech**

(1983) and **Brown & Levinson** (1987 [1978]), thus entitled **"Politeness Theories in Modernity"**. **Part II (Chapter 4, 5)** is an attempt to explore an alternative politeness approach, unconstrained by these underlying *modernist* theoretical assumptions, and is thus entitled **"Politeness beyond Modernity".**

The dissertation is theoretical in nature. As careful investigation of each politeness theory is required for the argument, I provide an in-depth exposition of each theory, followed by critical engagement. Critiques of these major theories move from the sociolinguistics level to a discussion in a wider intellectual context, uncovering some of the underlying theoretical and philosophical assumptions behind politeness theories. The dissertation inevitably involves arguments and discussions from other disciplines, such as sociology, social theory, anthropology, philosophy and hermeneutics. The arguments in this dissertation are not data-driven, but one or two vignettes are provided for illustrative purposes.

5. Organisation of the chapters

In **Chapter 1**, I consider **Lakoff** (1973, 1975) and **Leech** (1983) and in **Chapter 2**, **Brown & Levinson** (1987 [1978]) highlighting both their positive contributions to the field and some of their weaknesses/problems. In **Chapter 3**, I uncover the assumptions behind existing contemporary theoretical construction and reconsider these three theorists' approaches in a wider intellectual context. I argue that Lakoff and Leech's theories conceive politeness as pragmatic rules/principles in a framework inherited from Saussurean structuralism. This can be viewed as a 'structure-centred approach', whereas B&L's theory uses an 'agency-centred approach', concentrating on the actor (agency) and borrowing theoretical constructs from 'rational choice theory'. I also show that B&L's Model Person is modelled after modernity's 'autonomous' 'rational' 'calculative'

self. My argument is that, just as in late modern sociology, the longstanding structure/agency, theory/practice, mind/body, objectivism/subjectivism dichotomies have faced epistemological difficulties, so politeness theories now also face comparable difficulties.

Having identified some of these problematic assumptions in 'modern' theories, in **Part II,** I explore alternative ways of understanding politeness. I employ three theorists as 'thinking tools' for this task. In **Chapter 4**, I turn to **Pierre Bourdieu**, a French sociologist, who attempted to resolve the dilemma of structure and agency through his 'theory of practice'. His notion of *habitus* provides a healthy alternative to B&L's politeness as 'conscious calculative action'. But Bourdieu's theory provides rather too limited a role for 'agency' in politeness. In **Chapter 5**, therefore, I turn to a Canadian sociologist **Erving Goffman**, whose socially constructed self in social interaction proves complementary.

In the **Conclusion**, I discuss what might prove to be viable for a discipline of politeness studies in late modernity. What should 'post-modern' politeness studies look like? I thus make epistemological explorations towards reconstructing a viable 'post-modern' approach to politeness. For this task, I turn to **Hans-Georg Gadamer**, a German philosopher who has explored the possibility of a more flexible social science which recovers *phronesis* (practical wisdom) mentioned in Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* through his notion of hermeneutical understanding. Looking into the future, I look at the Hearer's interpretation, which will be a major strand of *postmodern* politeness studies. Neither Bourdieu nor Goffman sufficiently explicate the Hearer's evaluative practice and perception, particularly 'contingency' around the Hearer. Gadamer's notion of hermeneutical understanding provides helpful insights in elucidating the Hearer's interpretation.

Part I

Politeness Theories in Modernity

Chapter 1 Lakoff and Leech

0. Introduction

This chapter introduces two theorists of politeness: Lakoff (1972, 1973, 1975, 1989, 1990) and Leech (1983). I discuss these two researchers' theories in the same chapter, because both of them understand politeness in terms of 'pragmatic principles'. They both established politeness rules/principles as an extension of Grice's Cooperative Principle (1967). Fraser (1990) classifies the views of them both as what he defines as the Conversational Maxim View.

Usually most researchers try to establish theories employing some current underlying theoretical framework to which they subscribe. Such theoretical frameworks often happen to be those dominant within their discipline at that particular time. These dominant frameworks are located within the wider academic discipline of linguistics, and I will clarify the researchers' position in relation to them. Such background information helps put each theory into its own proper historical perspective within the field of linguistics.

Section 1 of this chapter covers Lakoff's theory and **Section 2** covers Leech's theory. In Sections 1 and 2, I will first provide an in-depth exposition of each theory and then offer a critical evaluation of each. I will also consider their significant contributions to the field of politeness studies as well as any perceived weaknesses in their approaches. **Section 3** evaluates the underlying theoretical frameworks to which Lakoff and Leech subscribe. **Section 4** concludes the discussion of this chapter.

1. Lakoff (1972, 1973, 1975, 1989, 1990)

1.0. Introduction to Lakoff's theory

Robin Lakoff was one of the first researchers to examine politeness in modern linguistics. For this reason, she has been called 'the mother of modern politeness theory' (Eelen 2001:2). When Lakoff first presented her theory, the field of linguistics was dominated by Chomskyan linguistics, and pragmatics was still in its infancy as a discipline. Lakoff, coming from the tradition of transformational grammar, spent much time preoccupied with determining sentence acceptability using syntactic analysis alone, but she (1972, 1973) became convinced that syntactic structure is not the only decisive factor: "we need to worry about the context in which utterances were uttered, both linguistic and non-linguistic; only by appeal to context could we account for the unacceptability under some conditions of sentences, which under other conditions were unexceptionable" (1973:292) [underlining in the original]. In a 1972 paper, she claimed that "in order to predict correctly the applicability of many rules, one must be able to refer to assumptions about the social context of an utterance, as well as to other implicit assumptions made by the participants in a discourse" (1972:907) and gave some examples in several languages. Politeness was one of the areas that she discussed.

Although she had not yet established any politeness theory, Lakoff expressed her earlier ideas about linguistic politeness in her 1972 paper. She recognised that linguistic devices for expressing politeness vary from language to language and that what passes for politeness in one culture could appear to a member of another culture as either slavish or boorish (1972:910). She, however, assumed that "there is a universal definition of what constitutes linguistic politeness: part of this involves the speaker's acting as though his status were lower than that of the addressee" (ibid. 911). She claimed that "what may differ from language to language, or culture to culture – or from

subculture to subculture within a language – is the question of WHEN it is polite to be polite, to what extent, and how it is shown in terms of superficial linguistic behavior" (ibid.). After she had examined some cases of politeness in Japanese and English, she concluded that, in order to assign correct forms,

> it is essential to take extralinguistic contextual factors into account: respective status of speaker and addressee, the type of social situation in which they find themselves, the real-world knowledge or beliefs a speaker brings to a discourse, his lack of desire to commit himself on a position, etc. We cannot hope to describe or explain large segments of any given language by recourse only to factors which play a role in the superficial syntax: which traditional transformational grammar expressly prevents us from doing. (1972:926)

Her interest in politeness thus arose from her disbelief in the adequacy of the Chomskyan syntax-supreme approach.

Lakoff discussed linguistic politeness in several of her writings between 1972 and 1990. She proposed Rules of Politeness in "The Logic of Politeness; or, Minding Your P's and Q's" (1973). She discussed Rules of Politeness again with slight modifications in *Language and Woman's place* (1975)[9], but the central issue of this 1975 book is her concern with gender inequality in language use. She questions why women are supposed to be more "polite" than men, and why it is considered necessary for men to be more "polite" in the presence of women (1975:64). In the later 1970s and early 1980s when Brown & Levinson (1987 [1978]) and Leech (1983) were developing their own politeness theories, Lakoff did not modify her original rules of politeness, but rather elaborated on the topic in "The Limits of politeness: therapeutic and courtroom discourse" (1989) and *Talking Power: the Politics of Language in Our Lives* (1990). Below, I will discuss her rules of politeness and her ideas about politeness and evaluate

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[9] *Language and Woman's place* (1975) is widely recognised as an inaugural feminist research on the relationship between language and gender. In 2004, this book was republished with annotations by the author together with commentaries added by a number of feminist language researchers. Lakoff provides comments on her original work (1975) in her *Language and Woman's Place: Text and Commentaries* (2004). See 1.2.1. in this chapter for further discussion.

her approach.

1.1. Lakoff's Rules of Politeness

(a). Rules of Pragmatic Competence

Lakoff argues that most language speakers are working on the assumptions of both 'the philosophical notion of logical presupposition' and 'the pragmatic presupposition' (1973:292)[10] but she also claims that there are still more complex cases in which the sentence "reflects the speaker's attitude toward his social context" (ibid. 293). She insists that communication acts are sociological as well as linguistic and that linguists need sociologists' input to understand them properly.[11] She then argues that "just as we invoke syntactic rules to determine whether a sentence is to be considered syntactically well- or ill-formed…, so we need to have some kind of pragmatic rules, dictating whether an utterance is pragmatically well-formed or not, and the extent to which it deviates if it does" (1973:296). Thus in 1973 she proposed the following brief Rules of Pragmatic Competence.

1. Be clear
2. Be polite.

As for the rule of clarity, Lakoff (1973) accepts Grice's (1967) Rules of Conversation (Cooperative Principle) (See Appendix 1-A).[12]

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[10] *The following are some examples of logical and pragmatic presuppositions.*
(1)(a) is logically presupposed by (1)(b).
(1)(a)The present king of France is bald
(b) There exists at present a king of France.
(2)(a) is acceptable only in case (2)(b) is pragmatically presupposed by the normal addressee.
(2)(a) John has lived in Paris.
(b) John is still alive.

[11] Lakoff contends that "if one causes something to happen by linguistic means, whether purposefully or not, one is using a linguistic device; and it is within the domain of linguistics that these questions should be explored and answered, with help one hopes, from anthropologists and sociologists who have been studying these questions for years, and whose studies, we hope to suggest, may be furthered by the use of linguistic techniques of analysis, as much as ours may be by theirs" (1973:293) .

[12] Lakoff acknowledges the problems of Grice's rules of conversation: such as how these qualities are determined; how much is too much; how relevant is relevant; when a statement is obscure, but she overlooks them in this paper (1973:297).

Lakoff (1973:297) recognises that in Grice's view, violations of the rules of conversation are not perceived as non-conversations; violations of syntactic rules are perceived as non-sentences, but a violation of one rule is seen as allowing precedence to another rule. Similarly, Lakoff claims that when Clarity conflicts with Politeness, in most cases, Politeness supersedes: it is considered more important in a conversation to avoid offence than it is to achieve clarity (1973:297-8). In most informal conversations, the actual communication of important ideas is secondary to merely reaffirming and strengthening relationships, while in formal situations such as business conversations, or academic lectures, the Rules of Conversation tend to be in effect (1973:298). Thus she suggests that some discourses are more politeness-oriented and others are more information-oriented.

(b). Three rules of politeness

In 1973 Lakoff proposed three rules of politeness.

RULES OF POLITENESS (1973)

1. Don't impose.
2. Give options
3. Make A feel good – be friendly.

She rephrased these rules in 1975 as follows:

1. Formality: Keep aloof
2. Deference: Give options
3. Camaraderie: Show sympathy

Rule 1 "Don't impose" means "Don't intrude into another's business" or "Remain aloof" (1973:298). For example, if we ask a personal question, we apply Rule 1 and normally ask permission as in "May I ask how much you paid for that vase, Mr. Hoving?" but "*May I ask how much is 1+1?" would be pragmatically ill-formed as Rule 1 does not apply to such a situation (Lakoff 1973:298-9). A butler's utterance of

"Dinner is served" instead of "Would you like to eat?" is a case of Rule 1. Such use of the passive creates a sense of distance between speaker and addressee.[13]

Rule 2 "Give Options", the rule of deference, may be used alone or in combination with either of the other two rules. The speaker shows hesitancy in speech and action to make it look as though the option as to how to behave is left up to the addressee. In other words, it is to be "indecisive" (1990:36). For instance, 'hedges'[14] leave the addressee the option of deciding how seriously to take what the speaker is saying. Thus "John is sorta short" may be, in some contexts, a polite way of saying "John is short" (1975:66). Tag-questions also have a similar function.[15] Euphemism is another example of Rule 2. Avoiding the direct mention of an offensive concept or uncomfortable topic, the speaker employs euphemism and allows the addressee the option of determining what he or she is actually hearing (1975:67).[16]

Rule 3 is the rule producing a sense of camaraderie between speaker and addressee (1973:301). The purpose of Rule 3 is to make the addressee feel that the speaker likes him/her, wants to be friendly with him/her, and is interested in him/her. It can be genuine or merely conventional (1975:67). Lakoff argues that it is possible to combine Rules 1 and 2, to be both aloof and deferential. Similarly the combination of Rule 3 and 2, to be friendly and deferential is also possible. But she argues that Rule 1 and 3 are mutually exclusive. You cannot be extending the hand of friendship and

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[13] Other examples of Rule 1 are the use of the formal 'you' in those languages which differentiate between a formal and an informal 'you' such as usted in Spanish or vous in French or the use of titles plus names (Mr. Dr. Sir.). The use of technical terminology by legal or medical professionals (e.g. carcinoma instead of cancer) denying their emotional implication and the use of the passive or authorial 'we' in academic papers are further examples of Rule 1 in a professional setting (1973:299).

[14] A 'hedge' is a linguistic device by which a speaker modifies the force of a speech act or predicate.

[15] The speaker who says, "It's time to leave, isn't it?" may know what he is talking about, but might use such tag-questions not wishing to assert himself at the risk of offending the addressee (1973:300). The effect of the tag here is "to soften the declaration from an expression of certainty, demanding belief, to an expression of likelihood (1972:918)".

[16] For example, "Mr. Oglethorpe passed away last month (=died)." "They are in comfortable circumstances (=rich)." (1990:37) "Excuse me, I have to go to the little girls' room (=defecate)" (1973:301).

stepping back aloofly at the same time (1975:67). The appropriate use of nicknames and first name alone and choice of using an informal 'You' instead of a formal 'You' for languages such as French or Spanish can be Rule 3 devices. Backslapping or friendly teasing is typical Rule 3 behaviour. Use of expressions like, "y'know", "I mean" may also be Rule 3 devices.

Interestingly, what Lakoff proposed as Formality, Deference and Camaraderie as 'rules' of politeness in her articles in 1973 and 1975 are subsequently reintroduced, this time described as three basic 'strategies' of politeness, namely Distance (previously Formality), Deference and Camaraderie in her 1990 book (1990:35). Yet, she also refers to these strategies as 'politeness systems' in the same book (ibid. 39). When she uses the term 'system', she seems to refer to a certain conventional way of using politeness in a particular community. In any case, the oscillation between 'rules' and 'strategies' in her 1990 book suggests that Lakoff may not have been entirely happy with the use of the term 'rules'. Lakoff may have picked up the idea of politeness as 'strategy' from Brown & Levinson's (1987 [1978]) theory of politeness which viewed politeness as 'strategies' for minimising face-threatening acts. Lakoff's shift from speaking of 'rules' to calling them 'strategies' will be further discussed in 1.2.3. (a).

(c). Universal rules of politeness and cultural variation

Though Lakoff claims that the rules of politeness are universal, she recognises that customs vary (1973:303) and claims that the same three rules, which are universal, follow different orders of precedence in different cultures or 'politeness systems'. Lakoff describes what might happen when an American, a German and a Japanese, who all want to make a good impression and to be "polite" according to their own standards.

> the American will seem to the others overly brash, familiar and prying; the Japanese will seem cloyingly deferential; the Germans will seem distant and uninterested in the others to the point of arrogance. So they

> will part, each thinking the others are thoroughly detestable because of individual personality defects. And if each meets other members of the other cultures, chances are these first impressions will be reinforced, until national stereotypes are formed: Americans are "too personal"; Japanese are "too humble"; Germans are "too stiff." (1975: 70)

Though there are plenty of participants in these cultures whose rule application may be different for various idiosyncratic reasons, Lakoff points out that stereotypical behaviour for a German is to emphasise Rule 1, a Japanese Rule 2, and an American Rule3 (1975:70). During this early stage of her politeness studies, Lakoff was already recognising diverse cultural tendencies in politeness perception. Though the above statement may be labelled as cultural essentialism in the current academic climate, many researchers who conducted cross-cultural comparisons of politeness strategies using speech acts in the 1980s also saw cultures as dividing factors for different understandings and perceptions of politeness. They had an intuition that a particular 'culture' or 'speech community' may be a determining factor and made some similar generalisations about the 'politeness system' in different cultures.[17]

(d). Language typological differences and politeness devices

Lakoff (1973) initially viewed clarity and politeness as being opposed to each other, but later (1990:175) recognised that this may not be true in all languages: for instance, the two are inseparably interrelated parts of every communication in some languages like Japanese. In her 1990 book Lakoff quoted a Japanese linguist Matsumoto (1989) who argued that no utterance in Japanese can be neutral with respect to the social context.

[17] Many contrastive studies in 1980s revealed culture-specific features of discourse which can be construed as evidence for the claim that speech communities tend to develop culturally distinct interactional styles. For instance, Blum-Kulka (1983) showed that in requestive behaviours, higher level of directness of Hebrew speakers were found, compared with speakers of English. Tannen (1981) showed that speakers of American English to be more direct than speakers of Greek. House & Kasper (1981) revealed that German speakers tend to realise requests and complaints more directly than do British English speakers. Katriel (1986) investigated Israeli's 'dugri' (straight) talk and found that preference for such interactional style can be rooted in ideological origin and associated with the problematicity of cultural identity. For more examples, see Blum-Kulka, House, Kasper (1989b); Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Blum-Kulka (1987); Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989); Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984); Vollmer and Olshtain (1989).

English speakers may be able to say "Today is Saturday" to their professor as easily as to their friend. Instead, Matsumoto argues that Japanese speakers must always construct a sentence that fits into the particular social context. The following are three possible variations of "Today is Saturday" depending on the contexts.[18]

(1) a. kyoo –wa doyoobi da.
today -TOPIC Saturday COPULA-plain.

b. kyoo –wa doyoobi desu.
today -TOPIC Saturday COPULA-polite

c. kyoo –wa doyoobi de gozaimasu.
today -TOPIC Saturday COPULA-super polite

Matsumoto (1989 in Lakoff 1990:174) claims that there is no sharp discrepancy between those aspects of communication that are informative and those that are interactive, because the interactive relation is encoded and understood as an integral part of the information content of the message. In other words, politeness is in no way extraneous or optional but forms an intrinsic or mandatory part of the communication in such languages.

Lakoff (1990:175), recognising that this interactive relationship needs to be encoded and embedded in all utterances in languages like Japanese, still views Clarity and Politeness as being opposed to each other, at least in Western cultures: "For Westerners there is a sharp discrepancy between those aspects of communication that are informative – that is, are in keeping with the Maxims of the Cooperative Principle and exist for the sake of transmitting factual data about reality – and those that are interactive, designed to create or express the feelings of the participants about their

[18] (1a) may be used in expository writing, in newspaper articles, and in casual speech to people with whom the speaker has a close relationship. This style cannot be used without conveying additional information to someone who is distant or higher in position; for instance, by an employee to his/her boss or by a student to his/her professor. (1b) has a wider range of use in speech. The copula *desu* would be the appropriate form in a conversation with a stranger or with an acquaintance who is not a close friend. (1c) may be used on formal occasions among adults. A child would not use it, nor would an adult use it when speaking to a child (Matsumoto 1989: 209-210).

relationship" (1990:174). Lakoff (1990:178) maintains that the Cooperative principle and rules of politeness exist universally but their specific forms and range of applicability are aspects of individual cultures and probably, individual personalities and that it is necessary to know not just the rules, but also the meta-rules: to know when to be direct and when to be indirect; in a word, how to be polite. She also recognises that particular languages' typological features also determine when and how to express politeness.

(e). The discourse genre and the rules of politeness

In her earlier writing Lakoff (1973:297-8) claimed that when Clarity conflicts with Politeness, in most cases, Politeness supersedes: that is, it is considered more important in a conversation to avoid offence than it is to achieve clarity. Lakoff, however, encountered cases where this did not apply. In her later writing (1989), Lakoff made distinctions between different discourse genres and explained how, in some cases, rules of politeness operate in competition with other forms of discourse organisation. Lakoff explicitly claims in this paper that "the purpose of politeness is to avoid conflict (1989:101)".[19] Lakoff claims that "discourse genres can be divided into those that are explicitly designed for the purpose of communicating information, and those intended purely or mainly for interaction itself" (1989:102). In ordinary conversation (OC), adherence to politeness rules is expected. Yet there are some other discourse types, in which conflict is an intrinsic element. She examined psychotherapeutic discourse (TD) and American courtroom trial discourse (CD). In these contexts, 'non-polite' behaviour can be systematic and normal, which is quite distinct from being 'rude', because politeness rules are not expected in such circumstances. Lakoff now suggests that

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[19] Another of Lakoff's definitions of politeness in her 1990 book is that "Politeness is a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human exchange" (1990:34).

speakers operate not within a simple dichotomy of polite vs. non-polite but with a threefold distinction of polite, non-polite and rude (1989:103). In this distinction, 'polite' applies to "those utterances that adhere to the rules of politeness whether or not they are expected in a particular discourse type"; 'non-polite' applies to "behaviour that does not conform to politeness rules, used where the latter are not expected"; and 'rude' applies to "behaviour that does not utilise politeness strategies where they would be expected, in such a way that the utterances can only or more plausibly be interpreted as intentionally and negatively confrontational" (ibid.).

She assumes that in OC it is a convention that participants share power equally in terms of turn-allocation and topic-choice (1989:105). However in TD and CD, a power imbalance is unavoidable. For instance in TD, distance politeness is violated when a therapist's interpretation becomes intrusive and confrontational and camaraderie is violated when a therapist needs to reinforce authority. In CD, experienced trial lawyers will be very careful to apply all possible forms of politeness so that one side may be favoured by the jury over the other. However, there is occasional systematic intentional and non-reciprocal rudeness. It is rule-governed rudeness, not an anomaly in a confrontation-favoured system (1989:123). Thus in both TD and CD, there is a unilateral violation of politeness. Having analysed TD and CD, Lakoff concludes that "it is necessary to assign discourse types to either informative (clarity) or interactive (politeness) genres; and to further subdivide the former into confrontational and non-confrontational modes" (1989:126) because the absence of politeness has different meanings in each of these subtypes.[20] Thus, in this later article, Lakoff (1989)

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[20] Lakoff discusses other features in CD and TD. For instance, in CD, frequent use of formal address terms such as Your Honour, Judge [Last name], elaborate opening and close of each session, the order of entering the courtroom, judges' robes all suggest that there is formality of ritual or ceremony in CD. CD makes use of conventional public style. On the other hand in TD, conventional intimacy or camaraderie is used, because TD is quintessentially private discourse, about private topics. However, the camaraderie of TD is conventional, not a sign of true intimacy.

recognises that universal Rules of Politeness do not apply in the same way in different discourse genres even in the same cultural contexts as she originally proposed in 1973 and 1975. In other words, later on Lakoff starts to recognise the difficulties of establishing and applying the same 'universal rules of politeness' to a variety of discourse genres.[21]

(f). Women and politeness

In *Language and Women's Place* (1975), Lakoff argues that the kinds of politeness used by, of and to women do not arise by accident and that they are stifling, exclusive, and oppressive (1975:83). Some think that women cannot follow the rules of conversation: that women's discourse is necessarily indirect, repetitious, meandering, unclear, and exaggerated – the antithesis of every one of Grice's principles – while of course a man's speech is clear, direct, precise and to the point! Lakoff thinks it is idiotic to hold such a sexist view. However, she admits that there is a stereotype that "[i]n general and in traditional American culture…women will tend to speak with reference to the rules of politeness, conversational implicature, and interpersonal exploration; men will tend to speak with reference to the rules of conversation and straight factual communication (1975:74). Similarly she observes that in traditional American society,

> women's politeness is principally of the Rule 1 plus Rule 2 type, establishing and reinforcing distance: deferential mannerisms coupled with euphemism and hypercorrect and superpolite usage. Women's language avoids the markers of camaraderie: backslapping, joke telling, nicknaming, slang and so forth. In all-female groups, we find devices that recall male intimacy-creating gestures: embraces for backslapping, discussion of personal things. But in mixed groups, all manifestations of camaraderie disappear; this is really the principal problem: why in mixed groups there is nothing identifiable as Rule 3 behavior (1975:79).

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[21] Guy Cook (1998a:140) defines 'genre' as follows: "Genres are types of spoken and written discourse recognised by a discourse community. Examples are lectures, conversations, speeches, notices, advertisements, novels, diaries, shopping lists". Lakoff, however, seems to use the term 'discourse genre' for 'discourse styles' expected in different situational contexts.

She also finds that "men generally feel free to address women by first name alone or nickname much sooner in a relationship than a woman feels free to so address a male" (ibid.80). Lakoff claims that "it is the dominant group in a society that establishes stereotypes of the other groups and decides which groups, on the basis of these stereotypes, are "good" or "bad"" (1975:74). As members of non-dominant groups, females have the choice of denying the stereotype of 'lady-like' politeness or reaffirming it and extolling it as a virtue. Lakoff is disappointed to discover that the latter position has been a strong one; most women tend to reaffirm such stereotypes and consider non-aggressiveness to be a virtue (1975:75). Lakoff (1975) urges female readers not to continue to be brainwashed. *Language and Woman's Place* (1975) is a little book of propaganda, in which she speaks to female readers: "If we are aware of what we're doing, why we're doing it and the effects our actions have on ourselves and everyone else, we will have the power to change" (1975:83). This book later became a seminal book for studies of 'language and feminism'.

As early as the 1970s Lakoff recognised that hegemony, i.e. "forms of power which depend upon consent rather than coercion" (Fairclough 2001:232) exists in linguistic practice; women accept or reaffirm that they are expected to be lady-like. Lakoff recognised that power relations in society influence or control the use of politeness. Different rules of politeness seem to exist for people who are in different positions in society and rules seem to be in favour of the dominant. This theme of power in politeness will be explored further in Chapter 4 in the discussion of Bourdieu's sociology.

1.2. Evaluation of Lakoff's approach

Lakoff made a great contribution to the field through her early attempt to formulate

rules of politeness as pragmatic rules, although it was not entirely successful. As I will suggest below, many of her struggles seem to have arisen from the school of linguistics from which she had come and her continuing faithfulness to their approach. I will evaluate Lakoff's approach to politeness in relation to her place in linguistics first. Then I will point out her contributions to the field and some problems in her approach.

1.2.1. Lakoff's positioning in linguistics

Lakoff (1972:907; 1973:292) had come from the Chomskyan School. The Chomskyan (1965:4) dichotomy of *competence* (the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language) and *performance* (the actual use of language in concrete situations) partly reflects the Saussurean dichotomy between *langue* and *parole*; both sharing the view that human language is seen as a realisation in utterances of the associated abstract linguistic system and *langue* is the core of linguistic inquiry (Jaworska 1998:75). *Langue* is the linguistic system shared by members of a speech community, which enables them to produce and understand specific utterances and text. *Parole* is applied both to such specific utterances and also to the processes whereby the linguistic system is used in the production or comprehension of actual utterances/texts. Saussure insists that linguists should be concerned mainly with describing the underlying linguistic system *(langue)* for langue is a coherent and analysable object. Similarly, the core subject matter in Chomskyan linguistics concerns *competence*.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1999:469) point out that Chomskyan linguistics is a philosophical project within a hybrid of Cartesian and formalist philosophy (Chomsky 1966). Chomsky's view of language results from a Cartesian concept of mind, as follows: 1) Language is structural. 2) Language is a universal, innate, and autonomous capacity of mind, independent of any connection to things in the external world. 3) Language must have an essence, something that makes language

what it is and inheres in all languages (i.e. Universal Grammar). 4) Language arises from an autonomous mental faculty, independently of the body (Lakoff and Johnson 1999:471-2). Chomsky claims that every human individual has access to a complete linguistic system, as represented in his or her mind by introspection, as native speakers have intuitive judgement about the acceptability, ambiguity, usage and other formal features of the sentence. Thus for Chomskyan linguists, this mental grammar is the primary source of linguistic data (Jaworska 1998:75).

Even while Chomskyan linguistics was still dominant in the US, there were already some language researchers who valued the importance of *language use*.[22] Robin Lakoff (1972) was aware of such non-Chomskyan strands of language study and listed the names of Jespersen, Sapir, Malinowsky, Firth, Nida, Pike, Hymes, Friedrich, Tyler etc. She expressed regret that "the idea has not merely been forgotten by transformation grammar; rather, it has been explicitly rejected" (1972:926 footnote 12). The early 1970s was a time of serious questioning of earlier theories, particularly the syntax-only approach of Chomsky and his followers. Mey (2001:4) describes this period as also being the time of pragmatics in the making.

Lakoff attempted to establish politeness as pragmatic rules just around this period. Lakoff (1973) initially tried to establish universal rules of politeness, following the Chomskyan-Saussurean linguistics tradition in which they aimed to establish an idealised homogeneous language system. She, however, later recognised that the task was not as simple as establishing syntactic rules. For instance, her initial hypothesis that 'when Clarity conflicts with Politeness, politeness supersedes' (1973:297-8) could no

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[22] Hymes, trying to establish an interdisciplinary field centred around *language use*, collected articles from various fields and published them as *Language in Culture, and Society: Reader in Linguistics and Anthropology* (1964). Later Gumperz and Hymes published another similar collection of interdisciplinary works, *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication* (1972). Hymes (1972) also proposed the notion of *communicative competence* in opposition to Chomsky's rather narrow notion of *competence*. Various new language-related disciplines (e.g. sociolinguistics, anthropological linguistics, interactional sociolinguistics, conversational analysis) have emerged from this approach of focusing on practical language use rather than on a theoretical linguistic system.

longer be sustained when she discovered that the same rules of politeness do not work for different discourse genres (See 1.1.(e).). Also her hypothesis does not seem to work in languages like Japanese in which politeness concerns are always required. (See 1.1.(d).). Lakoff ended up having to modify her rules repeatedly. This will be discussed further as I explore some problems in Lakoff's approach in 1.2.3.

Lakoff's views of language and language study have been in the course of change over the past three decades, which may be useful in understanding her position in linguistics. Lakoff (2004) recently published a new revised *Language and Woman's Place*, in which she commented retrospectively on her original version (1975). Her comments reveal changes in her views. She assumed in the 1970s that some aspects of Chomskyan transformational generative grammar (TGG) may reasonably be brought into discourse analysis. She was not aware then that extension of the TGG to interaction and discourse would become outrageous both to syntactic theorists and to those who are not trained as theoretical syntacticians. When TGG linguists spoke of structure 'beyond the sentence level', they "thought of larger units as concatenations of sentences: S + S + S…, rather than as structures with rules of their own, wholes different from the sum of their parts" (Lakoff 2004:18).

In the light of the emergence of various methods of language study in 1970s and 1980s,[23] particularly study using natural conversational data, Lakoff's method was criticised by conversation analysts for not being entirely 'empirical'. In response to this, Lakoff (2004:24) claims that the work she wanted to do could not be done without the

[23] Lakoff (2004:20) mentioned the emergence of non-Chomskyan methods of language study as follows: "During the 1970s pragmatics focused attention on the function of sentence-level phenomena rather than their form, recasting them as 'utterances' rather than 'sentences'....By the mid-1970s conversation analysis had been brought into sociolinguistics...By the 1980s discourse analysts were examining many types of communication, often via analysis of conversations; language in the courtroom, at dinner parties, between the sexes, in the workplace.... These analyses made it clear that discourse should be understood not as concatenations of S's, but as language directed toward particular interactive and psychological purposes".

application of mentalistic methods and intuitionist discovery procedures.[24] She argues that language study based on empirical data such as conversational analysis alone does not allow her to deal with what does not occur in the transcript, therefore it does not deal with paradigm gaps. In such cases Lakoff believes that intuition and introspection must play a role. Thus as of 2004, Lakoff had insisted that linguistics must have both mentalistic and empirical methods at its disposal.[25]

1.2.2. Lakoff's contribution to politeness studies

Lakoff's contribution to politeness studies often seems to be underestimated by scholars analysing politeness today. However, she was the first to theorise politeness in terms of universal pragmatic rules, thus known as the 'mother of modern politeness theory' (Eelen 2001:2). Lakoff identified key concepts, namely Distance (previously Formality), Deference and Camaraderie, which were rephrased and became essential concepts in subsequent politeness theories.[26] For instance, Lakoff's Distance (Rule 1) and Camaraderie (Rule 3) are reminiscent of 'negative politeness' and 'positive politeness' in Brown & Levinson's (1987 [1978]) theory, which came later. Lakoff herself rephrased distance and camaraderie as 'negative and positive politeness' in her later article (1989:107). There are many other traces of Lakoff's Rules of Politeness in B&L's politeness theory. Some examples (e.g. hedges, tag-question) of Lakoff's Deference (Rule 2) politeness are classified as 'negative politeness' in B&L's framework and others (e.g. euphemism, or being ambiguous) are included in

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[24] Mentalism is the belief that mental state and processes are prior and exist independently of behaviour. It is the opposite of behaviourism (Cook 1998b:211). Chomsky (1965:4) argues that "linguistic theory is mentalistic, since it is concerned with discovering mental reality underlying actual behaviour". His theory of grammar is a model of the speaker's competence, part of the internal structure of his/her mind. Every individual has access to a complete linguistic system in his or her mind through intuition. So the intuitionist approach is the opposite of an empiricist approach.

[25] This may be because of her conviction that linguistics is the study of language systems. She is probably concerned to establish as complete a language system as possible as in formalist linguistics.

[26] The original idea for these concepts may have come from Brown and Gilman's (1960) seminal paper, "pronouns of power and solidarity".

'off-record' strategies.[27]

Leech (1983) also seems to have gained insights from Lakoff's Rules of Politeness. Leech creates some scales as parameters for determining appropriate 'tact' to a given situation. Leech's 'Optionality Scale' and 'Indirectness Scale' remind us of Lakoff's Politeness Rule 2: Give Options. His 'Authority/Power Scale' and 'Social Distance Scale' seem to be related to Lakoff's Rule 1 (Distance) and Rule 3 (Camaraderie). Although Lakoff's three rules of politeness may not cover all possible politeness phenomena, they laid a most useful foundation for developing subsequent politeness theories.

Lakoff also contributed to the discussion of 'language and power' particularly in relation to gender. Cameron, McAlinden and O'Leary (1989) record that because of the importance of her book *Language and Woman's Place* (1975) at a time when the field had yet to establish itself, "many later researchers apparently felt obliged to begin their own investigation with the so-called 'Lakoff hypothesis'".[28] She was aware that the rules of politeness are not equally available to all interlocutors. She claims that women tend to be more polite than men, because they are expected to use so-called 'women's language' (See. 1.1.(f) and 1.2.1). Lakoff, through observation of women's language, recognised the forms of power of the dominant group achieved by consent (or acquiescence) of the majority, which then becomes a 'common sense' assumption. Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place* (1975) inspired many researchers in 'women and politeness' (e.g. Holmes (1995); Beeching (2002); Mills (2003)) and in 'language and gender' (e.g. Cameron, McAlinden & O'Leary (1989); Coates (2004 [1993]); Holmes (1997); Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (2003); Christie (2000); Holmes & Schnurr

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[27] Lakoff did not explain why there are just these three rules and how they are related. whereas Brown & Levinson (1987:61) employed the notions of 'negative face' and 'positive face' as properties of interacting participants to explain them: Distance strategies arise from the desire which produces 'negative face' and Camaraderie strategies arise from the desire which produces 'positive face'.

[28] Lakoff's hypothesis is summarised in Cameron, McAlinden and O'Leary 1989:75-76.

(2006)). Researchers in Critical Discourse Analysis today often discuss such 'hegemony' prevalent in linguistic practices. It is noteworthy that Lakoff was already aware of such normalised inequality ingrained in language practice as early as the 1970s. Lakoff also pointed out that power and politeness are closely related (1989:127) through examining therapeutic discourse (TD) and court discourse (CD) (See 1.1.(e).),

1.2.3. Problems in Lakoff's approach

(a). The notion of 'rules'

The first problem is the notion of 'rules' that she employed initially. As mentioned in 1.1.(b)., Lakoff does not seem to be entirely clear in what she means by the term 'rules'. Out of her dissatisfaction with the Chomskyan syntax-supreme approach and its neglect of social context (1972:926), Lakoff proposed her Rules of Pragmatic Competence, but she nonetheless employed the notion of 'rules' as in the Chomskyan framework (1973:296) and placed her Rules of Politeness in juxtaposition with Rules of Conversation (Grice's Maxims). Chomsky employed 'principles' and 'rules', common terms in scientic theory construction. Mey (2001:68) points out that the chief property of a grammatical rule is its ability to *predict*. The Chomskyan syntactic rules contain all the information needed to establish ('generate') the entire set of correct ('well-formed') sentences of a language. Thus as far as syntax is concerned, language is rule-generated (ibid.).

However, such rule construction may only be possible because Chomsky deals with idealised language in the mind of the individual (*competence*). Language in actual social action (*performance*) inevitably brings into play complex extralinguistic contextual factors. It seems impossible to establish similar pragmatic 'rules' which would be capable of *predicting* every possible situation of appropriateness in social

interaction.[29] As already mentioned, Lakoff started to use the term 'strategies' instead of 'rules' in her 1990 book. This suggests that Lakoff herself may not have been entirely happy with the use of the term 'rules'. However, she also employed the term 'politeness system' in the same book; and the term 'system' suggests that she has not entirely given up the notion of 'rule'. Her oscillation between 'rules' and 'strategies' suggests some uncertainty about how she views politeness.

To view politeness as 'rules' implies that politeness is subject to the intrinsic rules of a language system, i.e. belonging essentially to that language, whereas to view politeness as 'strategies' implies that politeness is an individual language user's strategy which they choose for themselves, i.e. arising from the human language user. In formalist linguistics, researchers are interested in establishing language as system through 'rules' and the actual 'language users' are pushed out of the picture in this kind of framework. Lakoff initially followed this approach and attempted to explain politeness as 'pragmatic rules'. However, her subsequent use of 'strategies' instead of 'rules' (1990) seems to indicate that she had began to recognise the limitation of the 'language as system' approach which sees 'pragmatic rules' as part of a language system (structure); she began to perceive politeness as the 'language users' strategic choice. Seeing politeness as 'strategies' is a totally different approach to politeness, in which 'language users' (agency) are the centre of enquiry. Its typical example is Brown & Levinson's (1987, [1978]) approach, in which a 'language user', the Model Person, is the centre of their theory, as we will see in Chapter 2. The two approaches are incompatible (one focusing on structure and the other focusing on agency). Lakoff may not have recognised this. In fact, when Lakoff started to call Rules of Clarity and Rules of Politeness (1973) 'clarity and rapport strategies' in her 1990 book, only the

[29] Leech (1983) had similar concern about the use of 'rules' and restricted its use to syntax. He employed the notion of 'principles' in pragmatics.

vocabulary shifted from 'rules' to 'strategies' but it seems that the content of the discussion has not been changed. I will discuss the significance of difference between two approaches further in Chapter 3.

(b). Relationship between Rules of Clarity and Rules of Politeness

The second weakness is Lakoff's claim that clarity and politeness are opposed to each other but she had to modify this more than once: when she recognised a more complex interplay between two rules through TD and CD (See 1.1.(e).) and when she discovered that in some languages like Japanese there is no sharp distinction between clarity and politeness because the two are interrelated parts of every communication (See 1.1.(d).). I argue that the difficulty Lakoff encountered lies in the framework that she chose for her theory construction, i.e. Grice's Cooperative Principle (Rule of Conversation) as a Rule of Clarity. Lakoff (1990:168) interprets Grice's framework as follows:

> Grice's major points are these: the basic purpose of talking (of all kinds) is the transmission of information; any departure from that is a violation in the sense that it requires special explanatory devices, whereas adherence to perfect logic does not; logical communication is defined in terms of supplying just as much information, no more and no less, as the occasion requires, of being truthful, and of being relevant both to the perceived purpose of the discourse and to what has been said previously.

Lakoff considers Grice's CP to be neutral logical standards. She (1990:168) argues that logical communication is ideal and that if an utterance does not meet the logical standards set up by the maxims, participants can understand it by performing inferencing operations, i.e. conversational implicature. Sarangi and Slembrouck (1992:123) point out that Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP) has often been perceived as "an 'ideal native speaker's situational context', against which the actual realities of interactions are to be described and accounted for". Fairclough (1985) claims that for the CP to apply in the way Grice defined it, interlocutors must relate as social equals. In

other words, "communicators must have the same discoursal and pragmatic rights and obligations to take turns and to avoid silences and interruptions, and they must have equal control over what for interactional purposes counts as 'truthful', 'relevant', 'adequate' and 'sufficient' information" (Sarangi and Slembrouk 1992:125). In taking Grice's CP into her framework, Lakoff has subscribed to this 'idealised' view of conversations inherent in Grice's CP.

Having built her theory upon Grice's 'idealised' Rules of Conversation, Lakoff proposes somewhat 'idealised' Rules of Pragmatic Competence in which she claims that clarity and politeness are simply opposed to each other. However in reality no ideal native speaker's situational context actually exists as is assumed in Grice's CP. Only after Lakoff had considered various real communicative contexts, did she become aware that the relationship between clarity and politeness turned out to be far more complicated than in the way she had initially hypothesized, but even her modified model (1989) by which she attempted to explain different genres by adding subdivisions of confrontational and non confrontation modes seems unsatisfactory.

(c). Awkward position between 'competence' and 'performance'

The weaknesses of Lakoff's theory may be partly attributed to her faithfulness to the particular tradition in linguistics from which she came, mainly the Chomskyan tradition and the Gricean tradition and her attempts to explain politeness in terms of these traditions. Though she used the notion of 'rules', I maintain that Lakoff's interest actually was most probably in 'performance' but she tried to explicate this in a theoretical framework intended to explicate 'competence', either linguistic or pragmatic. Lakoff came to realise that 'politeness' involves concepts too complicated for a theoretical framework intended to explicate 'competence'. She was actually beginning to recognise the inadequacies of the theoretical framework that she had been employing

in various places. (See discussions in 1.2.3.(a). and 1.2.3.(b).) From these, she came to recognise that it is impossible to establish every aspect of language as a rule-governed system and that it is very difficult to explain politeness within the framework of 'competence'. She challenged Chomskyan formalist linguistics by pointing out its inadequacies. Her change of vocabulary from 'rules' to 'strategies' shows her struggle with this framework. Lakoff acknowledged the problems, but she could not abandon the tradition of linguistics which deals with an idealised language system in search of an alternative framework. This seems to be the ultimate weakness of Lakoff's approach.

2. Leech (1983)

2.0. Introduction to Leech's theory

Developing from his earlier monograph, *Language and Tact*, in his book on pragmatics, *Principles of Pragmatics* (1983) Leech presented his theory on politeness as the Politeness Principle. As Lakoff's first politeness theory was published in 1973 and Brown & Levinson's politeness theory (earlier edition) was already available in Goody's (1978) *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction*, probably Leech was already familiar with both theories.

In *Principles of Pragmatics* (1983), Leech (1983:2) first reviews the development of linguistics and how the study of language use came to be established as a discipline, which provides the background against which Leech's pragmatic theory was developed. In the early 1970s, many Chomskyan linguists in the US, recognising the limitation of this syntax-only approach, began to claim that syntax could not be separated from the study of language usage. Outside this mainstream of American linguistics, there were some other influential independent linguists who focused on language use: Firth (1890-1960) insisted that language should be studied as part of a

social process and Halliday focused on the function of language and developed Systemic Functional Linguistics. Other important input came from a group of philosophers of language such as Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and Grice (1975, 1989), who all contributed greatly to the development of pragmatics. Leech (1983) also recognises other disciplines of linguistics whose work undermined Chomsky's paradigm, such as sociolinguistics, discourse analysis or conversational analysis.[30] Leech (1983:4) claims that these approaches had focussed attention on "meaning in use rather than meaning in the abstract" and have cumulatively shifted the direction within linguistics from 'competence' toward 'performance'. Consequently, in Leech's view, a unified account of what language is has been lost. Instead, a pluralism in approach to language has emerged.

Leech's main concern seems to have been the systematization of his own model of pragmatics in relation to other sub-disciplines in linguistics such as semantics, syntax and phonology. The Politeness Principle was incorporated into this framework together with Grice's Cooperative Principle. This section briefly introduces Leech's model of pragmatics and discusses his Politeness Principle and politeness maxims and then provides an evaluation of Leech's theory in a similar manner to that in Lakoff's section, providing an exposition of Leech's Politeness Principles and my evaluation of Leech's approach.

2.1. Leech's Politeness Principles

(a). Leech's models of pragmatics

As mentioned earlier, Leech presented his Politeness Principle in his *Principles of*

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[30] "Sociolinguistics has entailed a rejection of Chomsky's abstraction of the 'ideal native speaker/hearer'. Psycholinguistics and artificial intelligence place emphasis on a 'process' model of human language abilities, at the expense of Chomsky's disassociation of linguistic theory from psychological process. Text linguistics and discourse analysis have refused to accept the limitation of linguistics to sentence grammar. Conversational analysis has stressed the primacy of the social dimension of language study." (1983:4)

pragmatics (1983). I will briefly introduce his models of pragmatics. Leech (1983:4) views grammar and pragmatics as complementary domains within linguistics and insists that it is not possible to understand the nature of language without studying both these domains and the interaction between them. Consequently, while still affirming the centrality of formal linguistics in the sense of Chomsky's 'competence', he argues that this must be fitted into a more comprehensive framework, which combines both functional and formal explanations. Leech (1983:5-6) believes that the problem of distinguishing 'language' (*langue*) and 'language use' (*parole*) reflects a boundary dispute between semantics and pragmatics.[31] Leech (1983:6-7) suggests three possible ways of understanding the relationship between semantics and pragmatics.

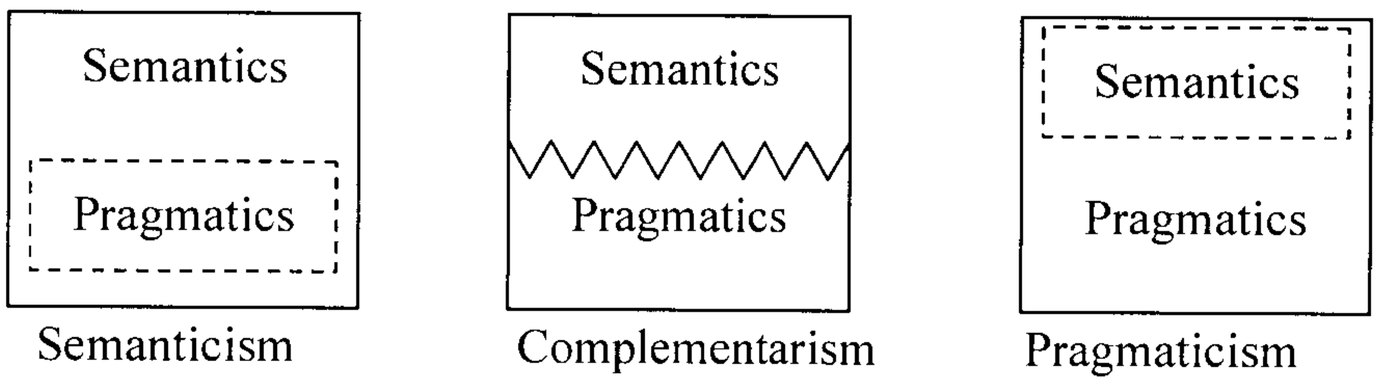

Figure 1.1. Three views of semantics-pragmatics relationships [title not in the original] (1983:6)

In generative semantics in 1970s, there was an effort to assimilate pragmatics to semantics, which is called 'semanticism' (left in the diagram above). In this view, the illocutionary force of an utterance was encapsulated in its semantic structure and analysed in its deep structure or semantic representation, such as *I state to you that X, I order you to Y.* The opposite of 'semanticism' is 'pragmaticism' (right in the diagram above), which assimilates semantics into pragmatics.[32] Leech (1983) takes the third

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[31] Semantics traditionally deals with meaning as in "What does X mean?", while pragmatics deals with meaning as in "What did you mean by X?" In other words, "meaning in pragmatics is defined relative to a speaker or user of the language, whereas meaning in semantics, is defined purely as a property of expression in a given language, in abstraction from particular situations, speakers, or hearers" (1983:6).

[32] Influential philosophers of language who have been sceptical of traditional approaches to meaning in terms of abstract mental properties, i.e. concepts, such as Austin, Searle, Wittgenstein, Alston, take this view. For instance, Searle (1969:17) viewed the theory of meaning as a sub-part of a theory of action; thus meaning is defined in terms of what speech acts speakers perform relative to their hearers.

viewpoint, 'complementarism' (middle in the diagram above). Leech argues his position as follows:

> Any account of meaning in language must (a) be faithful to the facts as we observe them, and (b) must be as simple and generalizable as possible. If we approach meaning entirely from a pragmatic point of view, or entirely from a semantic point of view, these requirements are not met, however, if we approach meaning from a point of view which combines semantics and pragmatics, the result can be satisfactory explanation in terms of these two criteria. (1983:7)

Leech (1983), then, builds his model of pragmatics on Halliday's (1973) three functions of language, i.e. *ideational, interpersonal* and *textual functions*. (See Appendix 1-B) Halliday tries to integrate all three functions, but Leech understands that the ideational function belongs to grammar while interpersonal and textual functions belong to pragmatics as in Figure 1.2. Leech uses the term 'rhetoric' instead of 'function': the term 'rhetoric' for Leech refers to "the effective use of language in communication" (Leech 1983:15). He also uses 'rhetoric' as a countable noun for a set of conversational principles related by their functions. He distinguishes between two rhetorics: interpersonal rhetoric (an input constraint) and textual rhetoric (an output constraint).

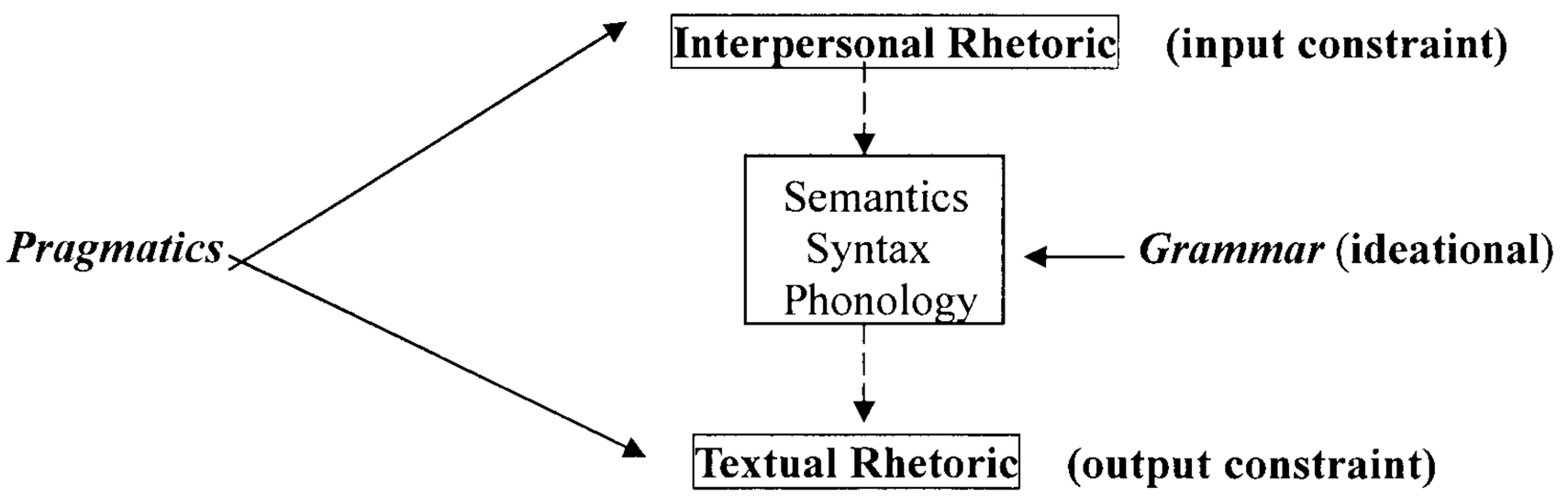

Figure 1.2. Function of grammar and pragmatics [title not in the original] (Leech 1983:58)

Leech (1983:59) also builds a process model of language in order to show how interpersonal and the textual pragmatics fitted into an overall function of language. (See Appendix 1-C)

(b). The Cooperative Principle and the Politeness Principle

Leech carefully distinguishes between the use of 'rule' and 'principle' in his theoretical framework. Leech (1983:5) restricts the use of the term 'rules' primarily to syntax and prefers to use the term 'principles'. Leech (1983:21) claims that the rules of grammar are 'constitutive rules' and the principles of pragmatics are 'regulative rules' borrowing Searle's (1969) distinction.[33] Thus he prefers to say that pragmatics is principle-controlled but not rule-governed. Leech lists several principles under interpersonal rhetoric as in Figure 1.3.

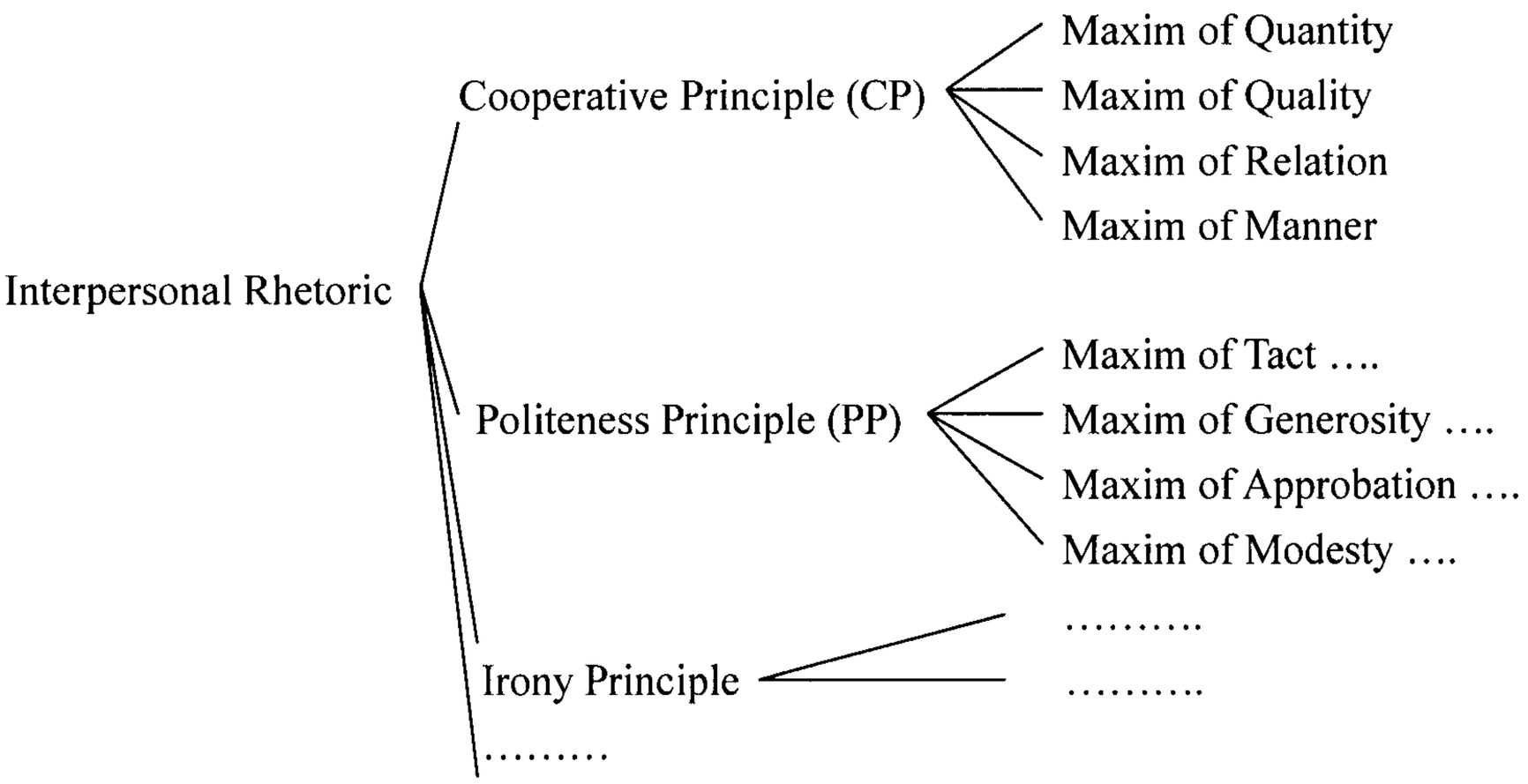

Figure 1.3. Interpersonal Rhetoric [title not in the original] (1983:16)[34]

Leech (1983) is in favour of Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle (CP) and incorporates it into his Interpersonal Rhetoric together with Politeness Principles (PP). Leech (1983:16-17) claims that "the rhetoric principles socially constrain communicative behaviour in various ways, but they do not (except in the case of 'purely social'

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[33] Searle (1969:33ff) claims that "conversational principles and maxims are 'regulative' rather than 'constitutive'. The rules of a language (e.g. the rules for forming tag-questions in English) normally count as an integral part of the definition of that language, but maxims do not. Hence if one tells a lie in English, one breaks one of Grice's maxims (a Maxim of Quality); but this does not mean that one fails in any way to speak the English language". (Leech 1983:8)

[34] See Appendix 1-D for the Textual Rhetoric diagram.

utterances such as greetings and thanks) provide the main motivation for talking. Cooperation and politeness...are largely regulative factors which ensure that, once conversation is under way, it will not follow a fruitless or disruptive path."

Leech (1983:8) employs Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle (CP) with some adaptation (See Appendix 1-E). He claims (1983:80) that the CP helps to account for the relation between sense (meaning as semantically determined) and force (meaning pragmatically, as well as semantically determined). The CP, however, in itself cannot explain why some people are often so indirect in conveying what they mean; and what is the relation between sense and force when non-declarative types of sentences are being considered. Leech argues that the Politeness Principle (PP) complements the CP in such cases.[35] The PP then is "not just another principle to be added to the CP but as a necessary complement" (Leech 1983:89) to the Cooperative Principle (CP). Leech also claims that there is a trade-off relationship between the CP and the PP (1983:82). "The CP enables one participant in a conversation to communicate on the assumption that the other participant is being cooperative (ibid.)" The CP has "the function of regulating what we say so that it contributes to some assumed illocutionary or discoursal goal(s) (ibid.)", whereas the PP has "a higher regulative role than this: to maintain social equilibrium and friendly relations, and this enables us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place" (ibid.).[36] In other words, unless the speaker is polite to the hearer, the channel of communication between speaker and hearer will break down.

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[35] Grice, who proposed the CP, is concerned with the logician's truth or the propositional meaning, whereas Leech is more interested in a broader, socially and psychologically oriented application of pragmatic principles. Leech claims that politeness becomes important in the latter. (Leech 1983:80)

[36] This resembles Lakoff's (1973:297-8) claim that when Clarity conflicts with Politeness, in most cases, Politeness supersedes: i.e. it is considered more important in a conversation to avoid offense than it is to achieve clarity

(c). Politeness and illocutionary functions

Leech (1983:81-82) formulates the Politeness Principle in its negative form as follows: 'Minimize (other things being equal) the expression of impolite belief' and 'Maximize (other things being equal) the expression of polite belief'. He considers the positive version as somewhat less important. Polite and impolite beliefs are respectively beliefs which are favourable and unfavourable to the hearer or to a third party, where 'favourable' and 'unfavourable' are measured on some relevant scale of values. He stresses that the real beliefs of the *Speaker (S)* are not in question, but rather what the Speaker purports to believe.

Leech (1983:81, 83) also makes a distinction between 'absolute politeness' and 'relative politeness'. He mainly deals with 'absolute politeness' as a scale, having a negative and a positive pole. Some illocutions, such as orders, are inherently impolite, and others, such as offers, are inherently polite. 'Negative politeness' therefore consists in minimizing the impoliteness of impolite illocutions, and 'positive politeness' consists in maximizing the politeness of polite illocutions.[37] He claims that different kinds and degrees of politeness are required in different situations. Leech (1983:104) classifies illocutionary functions into four types, according to how they relate to the social goal of establishing and maintaining what he calls 'comity'.

(a) COMPETITIVE: The illocutionary goal competes with the social goal; *e.g.* ordering, asking, demanding, begging etc.
(b) CONVIVIAL: The illocutionary goal coincides with the social goal; *e.g.* offering, inviting, greeting, thanking, congratulating
(c) COLLABORATIVE: The illocutionary goal is indifferent to the social

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[37] It is important not to confuse Leech's negative and positive politeness with B&L's negative and positive politeness. Brown & Levinson's negative politeness and positive politeness are related to their concept of face which consists of 'negative face' (the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction) and 'positive face' (the positive consistent self-image or personality claimed by interactants). (B&L 1987:61) Negative politeness is oriented mainly toward partially satisfying (redressing) the Hearer's negative face and positive politeness is oriented towards the positive face of the Hearer, the positive self-image that he/she claims for himself/herself. (For details of B&L's negative and positive politeness, see *Ch.2*.1.1.(c))

goal; *e.g.* asserting, reporting, announcing, instructing
(d) CONFLICTIVE: The illocutionary goal conflicts with the social goal; *e.g.* threatening, accusing, cursing, reprimanding

Leech (1983:104-5) explains that it is the first two, COMPETITIVE and CONVIVIAL which chiefly require politeness.[38] Where the illocutionary function is COMPETITIVE, the goal is intrinsically discourteous (e.g. getting someone to lend you money) and the Politeness Principle (PP) is required in an attempt to mitigate the discourtesy. The second type, CONVIVIAL functions, is, on the contrary, 'courteous': politeness here takes a more positive form of seeking opportunities for comity. Positive politeness in this case means observing the PP i.e. thanking or congratulating when you should do so. COMPETITIVE and CONVIVIAL illocution correspond to Leech's negative and positive politeness.

Leech then relates his illocutionary function to Searle's classification of illocutionary acts. (Searle's categories of illocutionary acts are summarised in Appendix 1-F.) Leech (1983:107) claims that 'negative politeness' belongs pre-eminently to the DIRECTIVE or IMPOSITIVE class, while 'positive politeness' is found pre-eminently in the COMMISSIVE and EXPRESSIVE classes.

(d). Leech's politeness maxims

Leech (1983:132) proposes six maxims related to the Politeness Principle which apply to the various illocutionary acts mentioned above.

1. TACT MAXIM (in impositives and commissives)
   a) Minimize cost to *other*; b) maximize benefit to *other*.
2. GENEROSITY MAXIM (in impositives and commissives)
   a) Minimize the benefit to *self*; b) maximize cost to *self*
3. APPROBATION MAXIM (in expressives and assertives)
   a) Minimize dispraise of *other*; b) maximize praise of *other*
4. MODESTY MAXIM (in expressives and assertives)

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[38] For the third type COLLABORATIVE illocutionary functions, politeness is largely irrelevant. For the fourth type, CONFLICTIVE functions, politeness is out of the question, because conflictive illocutions are, by nature, designed to cause offence.

a) Minimize praise of *self*; b) maximize dispraise of *self*

5. AGREEMENT MAXIM (in assertives)
   a) Minimize disagreement between one *self* and *other*; b) maximize agreement between *self* and *other*
6. SYMPATHY MAXIM (in assertives)
   a) Minimize antipathy between one*self* and *other; b) maximize sympathy between self and other*

Leech (1983:133) claims that not all of the maxims and sub-maxims are equally important. For example, if you were to compare two maxims, 1.the Tact Maxim appears to be a more powerful constraint on conversational behaviour than 2.the Generosity Maxim, and 3.the Approbation Maxim than 4.the Modesty maxim. There are some general laws: politeness is focused more strongly on the *other* person than on *oneself*; generally, negative politeness (avoidance of discord) is a more weighty consideration than positive politeness (seeking concord); politeness towards an addressee is generally more important than politeness towards a third party. Here I will explain the Tact Maxim and five scales/factors for measuring politeness in relation to tact. The other five maxims, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement, and Sympathy will be summarised in Appendix 1-G..

The Tact Maxim (in impositives and commissives) (Leech 1983:107-110; 123-127) is described as a) Minimize the cost to *other*; b) Maximize the benefit to *other*. The Tact Maxim applies to impositive and comissive categories of illocution, which refer, in their propositional content *X*, to some action to be performed by the hearer or the speaker. This action is called *A*. Suppose X is 'You will peel those potatoes'. Then X is placed on a Cost-benefit scale. The higher the cost to the hearer, the less polite X is. (Cost-benefit scale). Another way of obtaining a scale of politeness is to keep the same propositional content and to increase the degree of politeness by using a more and more indirect style of illocution (Indirectness Scale). Illocutions tend to be more polite as they increase the degree of optionality. (Optionality scale). Beside these, there are two others

relevant to politeness that Brown and Gilman (1960) discussed, which can be visualised as a two-dimensional graph as in Figure 1.4 below. The vertical axis measures the degree of distance in terms of 'power' or AUTHORITY of one participant over another. This is an asymmetrical measure, so that someone in authority may use a familiar form of address to someone who, in return, must use the respectful form. The horizontal axis measures a 'solidarity' factor or from the opposite point of view, SOCIAL DISTANCE.

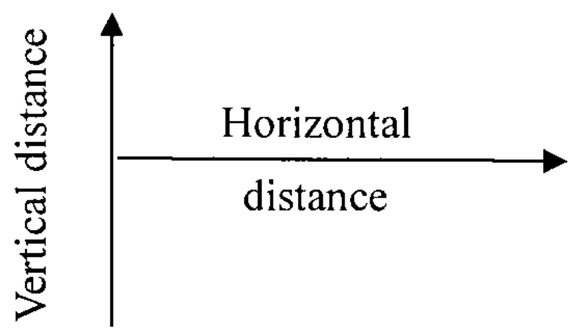

Figure 1.4. Social distance (Leech 1983:126)

The often cited choice between familiar and respectful pronouns of address in many European languages (e.g. *tu* or *vous* in French) is a typical example of this. The degree of respectfulness of a given speech situation depends largely on relatively permanent personal factors like status, age, degree of intimacy etc as well as on the temporary role of one person relative to another. A lecturer can reasonably command a student 'Get that essay to me by next week' but not 'Make me a cup of coffee'.

Five factors to which Leech drew attention are summarised as follows:

(*S* – speaker; *H* – hearer) [39]

1. Cost-benefit scale on which is estimated the cost or benefit of the proposed action A to *S* or to *H*

   cost to *H* ⟷ benefit to *H*
   less polite ⟷ more polite

2. Optionality scale on which illocutions are ordered according to the amount of choice which *S* allows to *H*

3. Indirectness scale on which, from *S*'s point of view, illocutions are ordered with

[39] Leech (1983) uses *s* for Speaker and *h* for Hearer in his book. For clarity reasons, I have capitalised them to *S* and *H*.

respect to the length of the path (in terms of means-end analysis) connecting the illocutionary act to its illocutionary goal

direct ⟷ indirect
less polite ⟷ more polite

4.Authority/power of one participant over another (vertical axis): status, age (cf. Brown and Gilman 1960)

5.Social distance or solidarity (horizontal axis): degree of intimacy (cf. Brown and Gilman 1960)

Leech (1983:127) summarises various parameters which influence tact as follows:

1. the greater the cost of A to H
2. the greater the horizontal social distance of H from S
3. the greater the authoritative status of H with respect to S
4. the greater will be the need for optionality, and correspondingly for indirectness, in the expression of an impositive, if *S* is to observe the Tact Maxim

(e). Metalinguistic politeness

Leech suggests the above six maxims as Politeness Principles focusing on the content of conversation, but politeness is also manifested in the way participants manage or structure conversations. Leech (1983:139-142) pays attention to such devices. For instance, speaking at the wrong time (interrupting) or being silent at the wrong time has impolite implications. Interlocutors may have to seek permission to speak or to apologise for speaking.

1. Could you tell me what time the bus leaves, please?
2. May I ask if you're married?
3. I must warn you not to discuss this in public
4. We regret to inform you that the aspidistra stands are no longer obtainable. (Leech 1983:139)

In 1, the speaker tries to engage in conversation with *H* before reaching the ultimate goal of obtaining information. 2-4 are 'hedged performatives': The use of "May I ask ?", "I must …," "We regret…" are mitigations of utterances. When interlocutors stress desirability, they may say, "I want to thank you…," "We are delighted to announce…," or "I must tell how much I admire your…", whereas interlocutors who bring bad tidings

may find it advisable to express both the distasteful nature of their task by saying "I'm sorry to have to tell you…," "We regret to have to inform you….," or "I must warn you that…". When *H* is a person of higher authoritative status than *S*, then giving advice may be judged as an imposition, so it requires a preface such as "Could I suggest…?" or "Might I just give you a word of advice?" Though the actual advice may be beneficial, the speech act of giving advice may violate both the Modesty and Approbation Maxims, because it takes for granted that *S* is superior in knowledge or experience or judgement etc. to *H*. Thus these 'hedged performances' are often used as devices of politeness.

Leech (1983:139-142) also mentions the polite and impolite implications of silence. If someone has been invited to join in a conversation by someone else, silence might be a sign of opting out of a social engagement to observe Leech's so-called 'interpersonal rhetoric principles'. When two or more people who are engaged in conversation are joined by an outsider, the newcomer may feel it rude to interrupt the conversation, but the participants may feel it rude not to give the newcomer a chance to join in. But on other occasions, silence might be most appropriate. Some types of conversation merely aim to preserve sociability. Malinowski (1923) called such types of behaviour Phatic Communion.[40] Following this, Leech argues for another maxim, the metalinguistic Phatic Maxim, provisionally formulated as 'Avoid silence' or 'Keep talking'. It is the need to avoid silence with its implication of opting out of communication. So the interlocutor may talk about the weather or say 'You've had your hair cut'. Such an utterance could be considered to be a violation of the Maxim of Quantity, but can be excused by the Phatic Maxim. The Phatic Maxim is more than just avoidance of silence, but it serves to extend the common ground of agreement and experience shared by the participants. Therefore the choice of subject matter tends to be

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[40] "Phatic communion ... is a type of speech in which ties of union are created by a mere exchange of words ... words in phatic communion ... fulfil a social function and that is their principal aim...." (Malinowski 1923:315).

non-controversial and to concentrate on the attitudes of the speaker rather than on matters of fact. Considering the nature of the Phatic Maxim, Leech claims that it might be treated as a special case of the Agreement and Sympathy Maxims.

(f). Other principles in Interpersonal Rhetoric

Leech (1983:142-144) includes other principles such as the Irony Principle and Banter Principle (See Appendix 1-H) alongside the Cooperative Principle and Politeness Principle in Interpersonal Rhetoric. These principles can only be explained in terms of other principles so he calls them parasitic or 'second-order principles'. Leech's principles and maxims in Interpersonal Rhetoric are summarised in Table 1.E in Appendix 1-E.

2.2. Evaluation of Leech's approach

Leech (1983) incorporated the Politeness Principle into his grand scale pragmatics theory. His proposal of detailed politeness maxims had mixed evaluations (appreciations and criticism), as I will show below in my evaluation of his approach.

2.2.1. Leech's positioning in linguistics

While Lakoff emerged directly from the Chomskyan tradition, Leech had had more diverse exposure to different traditions of linguistics.[41] His exposure to the Hallidayan functionalist tradition and to the Chomskyan formalist tradition[42] characterises his

[41] Immediately after finishing his MA thesis, Leech was given an Assistant Lecturer post in the Department of English Language and Literature at University College London (UCL) in 1962. In 1963, M. A. K. Halliday came to UCL as the first full-time Director of the Communication Research Centre (CRC). Leech was in close contact with him in 1963-4 as Assistant Director of CRC. Leech wrote later. "At that time I was greatly influenced, as were many in the country, by Halliday's linguistic theory, then called 'scale and category grammar' (Halliday 1961), later renamed 'systematic linguistics' or 'systemic functional grammar'. (Leech 2002:158)" Halliday advised Leech to take up semantics. While Leech was trying to develop his 'Hallidayan' semantics, he was given an opportunity to spend a year in the USA as a Harkness Fellow (1964-5). Leech decided to study linguistics at MIT. Ironically Chomsky was on leave in London at the time! Yet, Leech did have an opportunity to meet him and attended one or two of Chomsky's lectures upon his return. (For details see Leech 2002:158-9).

[42] Leech (2002:159) retrospectively writes: "Although MIT taught me a great deal, particularly about the

approach to pragmatics. Leech (1983:3) had seen how limiting generative grammar to strict formalism meant losing its position as the dominant paradigm in linguistics in the 1970s and was concerned with how to resolve the issue of grammar and pragmatics. Leech (1983:4) claimed that it is impossible to understand the nature of language without studying both these domains and the interaction between them. He also recognised that these two approaches to linguistics, formalism and functionalism are associated with very different views of the nature of language. (See Appendix 1-J)

Having recognised the limitation of a purely formalist, abstract approach to the study of language, Leech, in his *Principles of Pragmatics* (1983) presented a new framework, which elucidated the functional aspect of language or language use, while at the same time affirming the Chomskyan formalist approach to language. Prior to the publication of this work, Leech had been working on his version of semantics in the late 1960s, which developed into his PhD thesis entitled *An Approach to the Semantics of Place, Time, and Modality in Modern English.* His semantics was attuned to the generative semantic school (Leech 2002:160). Subsequently, Leech developed an interest in the study of pragmatics in the mid 1970s. In the late 1970's he wrote a number of papers discussing where the border or interface lies between pragmatics and semantics. Semantics and pragmatics were his main concerns at that time. Leech (2002:163) confessed that the train of thought in his *Explorations in Semantics and Pragmatics* (1980) began in semantics and ended in pragmatics. He felt that "pragmatics needed tackling by a separate, full-scale study" (2002:163). Leech endeavoured to build a comprehensive model of pragmatics, which he had been developing over the year's in his book, *Principles of Pragmatics* (1983). His theory of politeness, which he developed from his earlier paper *Language and Tact* (1977) was

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habit of rigorous thought and application of theory, the MIT approach to linguistics was too constraining for my taste. Perhaps, I was not caught young enough to imbibe the powerful drink of transformational grammar uncritically."

incorporated into his comprehensive theory of pragmatics.

Leech, having been associated with both approaches, did not find it unreasonable to accommodate both formalist and functional approaches in theorising pragmatics. Just as he argued for the complementary nature of semantics and pragmatics, he also argued for the necessary interrelation of formalist and functional approaches. Thus Leech (1983:76) described his formalist-functionalist view of language as follows: "Language consists of grammar and pragmatics. Grammar is an abstract formal system for producing and interpreting messages. General pragmatics is a set of strategies and principles for achieving success in communication by the use of the grammar. Grammar is functionally adapted to the extent that it possesses properties which facilitate the operation of pragmatic principles."

2.2.2 Leech's contribution to politeness studies

Leech's major contribution is his attempt to systematize his grand scale pragmatics and to incorporate and to account for politeness within that framework. Whereas Lakoff struggled to explain politeness using a rather limited notion of 'rules' in her transformational grammar tradition, Leech, who stressed the interrelation of formalist and functional approaches to language in his pragmatics model, explained politeness using the notion of 'principles' as part of Interpersonal Rhetoric. In Leech's theory 'principles' are largely regulative factors which socially constrain communicative behaviour (See 2.1.(a)).

Leech's second contribution is his proposal of various politeness maxims: Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement, and Sympathy. Fraser (1990:224) describes Leech's approach as "a grand elaboration of the Conversational Maxim approach to politeness." Thomas (1995:168) comments that if one sees Leech's 'maxims' not as maxims on a par with Gricean maxims, but as a series of

'social-psychological constraints' influencing the choices made within the pragmatic parameters to a greater or lesser degree, they could be used as an inventory for explaining cross-cultural differences in the perception of politeness and the use of politeness strategies. Comparably, O'Driscoll (1996) suggests that the maxim approach may be helpful for identifying culture specific maxims. "The creation of maxims is an attempt to encapsulate a specific set of characteristics which have been identified as being able to shed light on what appears to be essential, and generalise these to hold over a wide variety of situations in one particular culture" (O'Driscoll 1996:29). For instance, Gu (1990) developed a set of Chinese culture specific maxims, building upon Leech's maxims.[43]

In the discussion of his Tact Maxim, Leech identified three scales with a bearing on the degree of tact appropriate to a given speech situation (1983:123): 1. a Cost-benefit scale, 2. an Optionality scale, and 3. an Indirectness scale and two further scales which are highly relevant to politeness (1983:126), 4. Authority/power and 5. Social distance. (See 2.1.(d).) Leech acknowledged Brown and Gilman's (1960) 'power' and 'solidarity' as the source for his last two scales, 'authority/power' and 'social distance'.

Other researchers also recognise what Leech had identified as five scales and incorporated these (in part) into their own theories, though they did not categorise them exactly as Leech did. In Lakoff's (1973, 1975) theory, the 'Optionality scale' was treated as one of the politeness rules 'Give options' rather than a scale for measuring the degree of politeness. All five of Leech's scales were also included in B&L's (1978, [1987]) theory although B&L tidied them all up and placed them in different categories. The 'Indirectness scale' was classified as a large category of *Off-Record* strategy and the

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[43] The development of culture specific maxims out of Leech's maxims, which were probably meant to be universally applicable maxims is not without problems. This will be discussed in 2.2.3. below.

'Optionality scale' was a 'Give options' strategy included under *Negative Politeness* strategies. In other words, they are not scales at all, but are classified as types of politeness strategies in B&L's theory. On the other hand, Leech's 'Cost-benefit scale', 'Authority/power' and 'Social Distance' seem to correspond roughly to three independent variables for measuring the weight of Face Threatening Acts in B&L's theory: R (a culturally and situationally defined ranking of impositions), P (an asymmetric social dimension of relative power) and D (a symmetric social dimension of similarity/difference within *S* and *H*) respectively (B&L 1987:76-77). Thus Leech acknowledged various elements in politeness that his predecessors had identified and systematised them neatly and incorporated them into his grand scale pragmatics theoretical framework.

2.2.3 Weaknesses of Leech's approach

(a). The arbitrary nature of principles and maxims

Unfortunately, there seem to be many more criticisms than appreciations of Leech's approach (e.g. Dillon et al. 1985; Brown and Levinson 1987 [1978]; Fraser 1990; Thomas 1995; Watts 1992, 2003). As suggested, Leech proposed his Politeness Principle (PP) as something which complements Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP). The first criticism is that it is questionable whether Leech's PP can be considered to be on a par with Gricean CP (Dillon et al. 1985:455). In other words, the CP may be of a different order to the PP. For instance, Brown & Levinson (1987:5) write: "The CP defines an 'unmarked' or socially neutral presumptive framework for communication; the essential assumption being 'no deviation from rational efficiency without a reason'. Politeness principles are, however, just such principled reasons for deviation".

The second criticism is that Leech's numerous maxims are not ideal from the perspective of the law of parsimony. As Leech intuitively finds other new factors in

language use related to politeness or interpersonal rhetoric, he seems to keep adding them on to his taxonomy, as if he were able to cover every possible principle or maxim he can think of. Thomas (1995:167) commented that "[i]n theory it would be possible to produce a new maxim to explain every tiny perceived regularity in language use.... This makes the theory at best inelegant, at worst virtually unfalsifiable."

The third criticism is that though Leech tries to classify variety of politeness maxims into some kind of hierarchy, the hierarchies of maxims may seem to be rather arbitrary. Thomas (1995:168) points out that some of the maxims may be universally applicable and others might be culture-specific and some others such as the Pollyanna Principle might be totally idiosyncratic. Dillon et al. (1985) criticises the *ad hoc* nature of Leech's principles and maxims.

> A systematic analysis would provide a more convincing justification for each of the principles which Leech proposes. As it is, by trying to justify each one individually, Leech appears to be inventing principles *ad hoc*, the only determining factor being the particular utterances which he has chosen to use as examples; he provides no real reason why the process could not be continued *ad infinitum*. Why not suggest a Surliness Principle: 'Maintain distance by being offensive'? Or an Innocuousness Principle: 'Keep the conversation impersonal; talk about things like the weather'? These would account for a variety of utterances not currently handled by Leech's principles, and they would leave plenty of room for the invention of new principles to cover yet other examples. (Dillon et al 1985:455-6)

The fourth criticism is (e.g. Dillon et al. 1985, Thomas 1995) that Leech's politeness maxims seem far too arbitrary to be called pragmatic principles and his maxims can easily be interpreted simply as a list of cultural specific "social dos and don'ts". Gu (1990) developed culture-specific politeness maxims building upon Leech's maxims: he modified some of Leech's maxims (Generosity and Tact) and added new maxims, the Self-denigration Maxim[44] and the Address Maxim[45] to elucidate

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[44] The Self-denigration maxim consists of two submaxims: 'a) denigrate self and b) elevate other'. In some East Asian languages like Chinese or Japanese, when the Speaker refers to himself/herself or anything related to himself/herself or his/her in-group (e.g. family members), it is customary to use some

politeness phenomena in Chinese. Eelen (2001:10) points out that Leech's Politeness Principle is meant to be a pragmatic principle, which is descriptive, whereas Gu presents his Chinese politeness maxims as being essentially morally prescriptive and socially sanctionable precepts. However, in reality, Leech's maxims can be easily turned into culture-specific maxims.

Just as the classification of maxims seems arbitrary, the classification of the scales for measuring politeness may also seem arbitrary. Leech lists all five as if they were in the same category: 1.a Cost-benefit scale, 2.an Optionality scale, and 3.an Indirectness scale, 4.Authority/power and 5.Social distance (1983:123, 126). However, the first three seem to be psychologically motivated scales, and the last two may be viewed as socially motivated variables. It is not clear from his book whether these five scales are relevant to all possible politeness maxims or only to the Tact Maxim. If they only relate to the Tact Maxim, are there other corresponding scales for each politeness maxim? It seems that some of these scales such as Authority and Social distance would appear to be equally relevant to other politeness maxims. .

The arbitrariness of Leech's maxims may be due to his rigorous efforts to systematise politeness as part of his pragmatic theory. The natural course of such systematisation is to identify more detailed factors and this ends up in elaborate taxonomies. The underlying assumption in Leech's approach seems to be that it is possible to systematise language use in neat formats such as principles and maxims just as in other social sciences. It raises the fundamental question whether politeness can

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linguistic devices to show self-denigration. Similarly, when the Speaker refers to others, he/she is expected to elevate others and show respect (See Gu 1990:246-248).

45 The Address Maxim reads "address your interlocutor with an appropriate address term". Gu (1990:248-9) argues that the act of addressing involves a) the Speaker's recognition of Hearer as a social specific status or role and b) the Speaker's definition of the social relation between Speaker and Hearer. Choice of various address terms is far more complicated in Chinese than in either English or the T/V system in European languages. Perhaps that is why Gu set it as a separate maxim (See Gu 1990:248-252). Gu (1990) adds another new principle, a Balance Principle, which is the principle of reciprocation of politeness based on the Chinese notion of huánlǐ (Literal translation: return politeness): 'If the Speaker is polite to the Hearer, the Hearer ought to be polite to the Speaker'.

really be systematised into such neatly organised categories. The weaknesses of Leech's approach may not be attributed to Leech alone, but they may be no more than the general consequences of the quasi-scientific approach expected in social sciences, to which Leech subscribed. This issue will be further discussed in Chapter 3, as I will re-examine the theoretical assumptions behind Lakoff, Leech and Brown & Levinson's theories.

(b). Association of politeness with Speech Acts

Another problem with Leech's approach is that in his theory, all the politeness maxims are produced in the course of different speech acts. Both Lakoff and Leech based their theory on Grice's Cooperative Principle, but Leech (1983) associated politeness with particular speech acts or illocutionary goals, whereas Lakoff (1973, 1975) did not explicitly make such an association in her theory.[46] Leech argued that different kinds of politeness are required corresponding to the nature of the speech acts. The underlying assumption seems to be that politeness is in operation or needed only when interlocutors perform some kind of speech acts. But not all the forms of politeness are needed because of particular speech acts. For instance, the choice of T/V system or honorific expressions in languages such as Japanese or Korean is not triggered in case of performing particular speech acts.[47]

3. Evaluation of the underlying theoretical framework behind Lakoff and Leech's theories

Both Lakoff and Leech embedded Gricean Maxims into their framework and developed their politeness theories from there. Leech employs Speech Acts as well as Gricean

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46 Brown & Levinson (1987 [1978]) also associated politeness with the illocutionary force of certain acts, which are inherently face-threatening; they see politeness as redressive actions taken in order to counterbalance the potentially disruptive effects of Face Threatening Acts.

47 Gu's (1990) additional maxims, Self-denigration Maxim and Address Maxim are also not related to particular speech acts.

Maxims. In this section, I will evaluate these underlying theoretical frameworks.

(a). The Logico-philosophical approach to language

The weaknesses of Lakoff and Leech's approaches may be partly due to the theoretical foundation of early pragmatics that Lakoff and Leech adopted in their theory. Early day pragmatics initially owed much of its development to so-called 'ordinary language philosophers' who tried to understand how ordinary people manage to employ language and communicate effectively (Thomas 1995:29). Grice, together with his teacher, J. L. Austin, worked at Oxford University in the 1940s and 1950s. The work of both of them has become influential in linguistics because their appearance coincided with a growing frustration within linguistic studies, mainly deriving from the limitations of truth conditional semantics. Austin presented a Speech Act theory and Searle systematised and extended Austin's theory over a much wider range of acts. The field of pragmatics has flourished for the past four decades and now a wide range of research has been included in various journals of pragmatics.[48] However, Verschueren (1999b:872) recognises that there have been "processes of conventionalisation and habit formation in ways of looking at language use" and even "incipient tendencies towards the construction of an acceptable dogma (ibid.)" within the field of pragmatics. Consequently, many researchers in pragmatics today still tend to accept the early theoretical foundations of pragmatics as part of the theoretical tradition of the field.[49] I

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[48] As major journals in pragmatics, Verscheuren (1999b:872) lists *Journal of Pragmatics*, (Elsevier), *Pragmatics and Cognition* (Benjamins) and *Pragmatics* (International Pragmatics Association) and as journals in pragmatics-related fields, he lists *Text* (De Bruyter), *Language in Society* (Cambridge), *Discourse and Society* (Sage).

[49] Verscheuren (1999b:870) critically reflects on the historical development of pragmatics and proposes a broader view of pragmatics as "general functional perspective on (any aspects of) language, i.e. an 'an approach to language which takes into account the full complexity of cognitive, social and cultural (i.e. 'meaningful') functions in the lives of human being". A similar proposal was made in Verscheuren (1995) and he suggested then that for such pragmatics it requires that "linguistics join forces with neighbouring disciplines such as psychology, anthropology, philosophy, and even history" (1995:149). His book, *Understanding Pragmatics* (1999) is written from such a broad perspective of pragmatics, which can be seen as what pragmatics should be.

list some characteristics of the early pragmatic theories.

First, having been developed by philosophers, early pragmatics theories tend to be based on rationalistic assumptions rather than on empirical findings. Researchers in pragmatics assume that they can create linguistic data by accessing an internalized language system of their own. Consequently although pragmatics is supposed to deal with 'performance', i.e. actual improvisational speech production, the examples used in pragmatics are often not taken from naturally occurring conversations at all but are produced by a native-speaker's introspection.

Second, action is thought to emanate from an individual who has 'intentions' and is often conceptualised in terms of the strategies adopted by the individual speaker to achieve his/her 'goals' or 'intentions' (Fairclough 2001:7). This idea came from Grice's (1957 [1989]:220) claim in 1957 that "*A* meant something by *x*" is (roughly) equivalent to "*A* intended the utterance of *x* to produce some effect in an audience by means of the recognition of this intention."[50] Grice laid the foundation for pragmatics that meaning is associated with intention and that understanding an utterance is a matter of recognising the speaker's intention behind the utterance.

> When I take a noise or a mark on a piece of paper to be an instance of linguistic communication, as a message, one of the things I must assume is that the noise or mark was produced by a being or beings more or less like myself and produced with certain kinds of intentions. (Searle 1969:16)

Influenced by Grice's claim (1957), the task of early pragmatics is considered to be elucidating the process of how a Hearer successfully comes to recognise a Speaker's intentions.

Third, as in Gricean maxims, early pragmatics tends to deal with utopian verbal interaction with cooperative interaction and interlocutors are assumed to have equal

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[50] Grice's (1957) seminal paper, "Meaning", *Philosophical Review* 66, 377-388 is reprinted in H. P. Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.

control over its ground rules. (Fairclough 2001:7) Fairclough writes:

> The individuals postulated in pragmatics...are generally assumed to be involved in cooperative interactions over whose ground rules they have equal control, and to which they are able to contribute equally. Cooperative interaction between equals is elevated into a prototype for social interaction in general, rather than being seen as a form of interaction whose occurrence is limited and socially constrained. The result is an idealised and Utopian image of verbal interaction.... (Fairclough 2001:7)

Fourth, although researchers in early pragmatics deal with context in order to interpret utterance meaning, because of their rationalistic assumptions, the 'contexts' discussed in early pragmatics tend to be logical and ideal situational contexts devised by researchers themselves for the purposes of theory construction. Speech Act theorists interpret utterances in terms of intentionality ascribed to the speaker; they consider the 'felicity conditions' that make particular speech acts possible.[51] The underlying assumption seems to be that meaning can be established independently of any real-life social context. Geis (1995:13) points out that Speech Act theorists "have based their work almost exclusively on their intuitions as to how single, constructed sentences isolated from real or (usually) even explicitly constructed contexts might be used". Investigation at the level of one particular utterance or speech act may be theoretically convenient, but the actual communicative context is always more complicated. However, consideration of the speakers' intentions/goals and the ideal situational context, and felicity conditions that make speech acts possible is not enough. The meaning of any particular utterance is not solely determined by the speaker's intention or goal at the time of the act of speaking. Various factors such as the situational context, the social relationship of the interlocutors or the cultural context all come into play. Interlocutors

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[51] For example, the felicity conditions for Directive (request) that Searle considers are as follows:

Preparatory condition:	*H* is able to perform *A*.
Sincerity condition:	*S* wants *H* to do *A*.
Propositional content condition:	*S* predicts a future act *A* of *H*
Essential condition:	Counts as an attempt by *S* to get *H* to do *A* (Searle 1979:44)

are constantly caught up in or constrained by different roles they have to play in social interaction or the power relations between them and other participants. And these relationships are constantly being renegotiated during the social interaction. Geis (1995:13) argues that communicative acts are social and "involve particular factual states, social relationships between participants, psychological states and attitudes among other things" and that "social features of context play a critical role in the differentiation of communicative actions" (ibid.).

(b). Universal rationality assumed in Maxims and Speech Acts

Lakoff and Leech both accepted Grice's maxims as if they were universally accepted principles for all linguistic utterances. How can they assume that they are universally applicable? What is the source of Grice's maxims? Grice's answer is as follows: "I am enough of a rationalist to want to find a basis that underlies these facts, undeniable though they may be; I would like to be able to think of the standard type of conversational practice not merely as something that all or most do IN FACT follow but as something that it is REASONABLE for us to follow, that we SHOULD NOT abandon [capitalised in the original]" (Grice 1975:48). Levinson (1983:103) comments that Grice's maxims are not arbitrary conventions, but rather describe rational means for conducting co-operative exchanges and maintains that the maxims derive from general considerations of rationality applicable to all kinds of co-operative exchanges. 'Rationality' is a buzzword in *modernist* thinking (See *Ch. 3* 1.1.). However, Grice himself also added this: "a dull, but no doubt at a certain level, adequate answer is that it is just a well-recognized empirical fact that people DO behave in these ways; they have learned to do so in childhood and not lost the habit of doing so" (Grice 1975:48). This second answer suggests that Grice's maxims also may be little more than a product of Grice's own socialisation, and thus may not necessarily express a universal rationality

but only a particular local one. Do these maxims successfully serve as universal principles shared by all languages and known innately by all human beings? In 1970s Keenan (1976) challenged the universality of Grice's maxims by providing counter examples that people in Madagascar systematically violate Grice's first maxim (maxim of quantity) by not giving information when required.

Philosophers of language such as Grice, Austin and Searle seem to believe that it is possible to make reasonable generalisations by introspection and that their intuitions and their findings also have a universal relevance (Duranti 1997:227). However, the principles *invoked* by these researchers are inevitably bound to their cultural and linguistic presuppositions and therefore the universality of these principles is highly questionable. As Keenan (1976) challenged the universality of Grice's maxims, some linguistic anthropologists challenged the universal assumption of Speech Act Theory. Rosaldo (1982), based on her fieldwork among the Ilongots in the Philippines, argued that intention and sincerity, which are crucial in Austin and Searle's Speech Acts Theory, are irrelevant to the success of speech acts within Ilongot society. Instead successful accomplishment of an Ilongot speech act, the *tuydek* (roughly 'command') requires particular differences in social rank, which in turn derive from other qualities of persons achieved in social action such as a knowledgeable heart (Hill and Irvine 1993:8). Thus Rosaldo argues that people display through language use an understanding of their own peculiar ways of being in the world and that a speaker's use of language reproduces a particular social system and that speech acts in a society must be seen as part of its cultural practices.

Duranti (1997:228) observes very different notions of goals of linguistic interpretation between speech act theorists and linguistic anthropologists. For Searle and other speech act theorists, the goal is to produce a method for arriving at the necessary

and sufficient conditions of human communication, felicity conditions and sincerity conditions etc. in terms of the mental state of some persons in isolation from relations with other persons, whereas for Rosaldo and other linguistic anthropologists, the goal is to understand how particular uses of language might sustain, reproduce or challenge particular versions of the social order and the notion of person (or self) that is part of that order.

Founders of early pragmatics, who built upon rationalist assumptions, endeavoured to establish the principles which were reasonable for rational human beings to follow. But the interlocutors are not just 'rational' beings. They are 'social' beings as well as 'psychological' beings. Lakoff and Leech inherited the weaknesses of early pragmatics.

4. Conclusion

Having come from the Chomskyan school, Lakoff extended her grammatical rules to rules of Pragmatic Competence. She pioneered the field of linguistic politeness by proposing Rules of Politeness as being juxtaposed with Rules of Clarity (Grice's maxims). Her efforts to establish politeness as 'rules' were not entirely successful as she encountered many situations in which her original scheme no longer worked and needed revision repeatedly. Lakoff's interest was probably in 'performance' but she tried to explain this in a theoretical framework intended to explain 'competence'. Despite her dissatisfaction with the limitations of this framework, she could not abandon it and explore an alternative framework.

Leech's main concern has been to establish a comprehensive framework for pragmatics. Leech also proposed his Politeness Principle paralleling Grice's Cooperative Principles. Leech associated politeness with particular Speech Acts and

provided the relevant politeness maxims for different speech acts (See 2.1.(c)). His elaborate taxonomy of politeness maxims was welcomed but was often criticised for its inelegance and arbitrariness from the perspective of the law of parsimony.

Both Lakoff and Leech, building their theory (fully or partially) on the Saussurean-Chomskyan tradition, which aimed to establish an idealised language system, offered their constructs as the politeness 'rules' or 'principles' that people follow. They also relied heavily on early pragmatics for their theory construction, affirming Grice's cooperative principle and establishing their politeness rules/principles as its extension. Consequently, Lakoff and Leech inherited various problems inherent in early pragmatics. Because pragmatics theory is built upon rationalistic assumptions, the situational contexts are devised by theorists for the purpose of theorisation rather than taken from empirical data. Focusing on 'rules/principles', actual language users were virtually disregarded in their framework. In such approaches, which focus on language system/structure, there is little place to discuss exactly *why* language users are motivated to use politeness. I will discuss this further in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2 Brown and Levinson

0. Introduction

In this chapter, I will investigate Brown and Levinson's (1978 [1987]) theory of politeness. Brown and Levinson's approach is different from Leech's and Lakoff's approaches in many ways. Before discussing B&L's theory, I will highlight the differences.

First, all three theorists employed Grice's maxims in their theories of politeness. Lakoff and Leech accepted Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP) and proposed politeness principles as an *extension* of Grice's maxims. Brown and Levinson (B&L) also affirmed Grice's Maxims as rational and efficient rules of conversation, but they regarded politeness as *deviation* from Grice's maxims. In other words, B&L used the Gricean Maxims as a launching pad for the development of their new approach.

Second, there was a distinct shift of focus from principles of 'language use' to principles of 'social interaction'. Lakoff and Leech, relying heavily on early 'pragmatics', focused on elucidating the principles governing language use. Lakoff and Leech were both concerned with these contextual factors, but the early 'pragmatics' framework, which was characterised by the 'logico-philosophic' approach (Eggins & Slade 1997:24). Such an approach tends to overlook the fact that all communication acts must inevitably be social, and therefore fails to accommodate satisfactorily to factors such as situational context, the social relationship of the interlocutors and the cultural context, which are all essential bases for real communication. B&L, on the other hand, are well aware that the use of language and the social relationships of those who speak it

are inseparable and claim that "the principles of language usage may be largely coincident with discovering the principles out of which social relationships, in their interactional aspect, are constructed: dimensions by which individuals manage to relate to others in particular ways" (1987:55). B&L aimed at establishing a theory of politeness which provided an explanation not just of the principles of language use, but also of the principles of social relationship in interaction. Consequentially, politeness in B&L's theory was now no longer discussed exclusively in the 'pragmatics' arena.[52]

Third, B&L were committed to establishing 'universal' principles of politeness. Lakoff and Leech also had aimed to establish universal pragmatic principles of politeness, but they included culture-specific elements in their theories without indicating clearly which were universal and which were culture-specific. Lakoff's rules of politeness were intended to be universal, but she also suggested that the same three rules develop different orders of precedence in different cultures or 'politeness systems'. According to Leech's theory, some maxims may be universally applicable and others may be culture-specific but the distinction is not entirely clear. B&L, on the other hand, seem to have been committed to establishing a universal theory of politeness, and they state explicitly that their aims were to discover "some principles of a universal yet a 'social' sort" (1987:56) behind politeness phenomena and to propose a model that accounts for "the observed cross-cultural similarities in the abstract principles which underlie polite usage" (1987:57).

Finally, B&L focused on the interlocutors' motivation for using politeness while Lakoff and Leech saw politeness as part of pragmatic rules or principles that interlocutors are expected to observe during conversation. Lakoff and Leech did not pursue the essential underlying question as to the reason *why* interlocutors are motivated

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[52] 'Pragmatics' as discussed here refers to the narrow sense of the field of pragmatics in the 1960s-70s developed by philosophers such as Grice, Austin and Searle, and characterised by its logico-philosophical approach.

to employ polite discourse in the first place. B&L, on the other hand, looked at politeness from the perspective of language users themselves and tried to explicate their motivation for employing politeness. B&L (1987: 285) introduced the notion of 'face' borrowed from anthropology and sociology (Durkheim 1915; Goffman 1967) and used it as one of the key notions for explaining an interlocutors' motivation for using politeness and sought to define politeness as 'face-saving strategies'.

Thus B&L moved on from a pragmatics-based approach and established a theory of politeness drawn from a broader perspective of social interaction drawing upon anthropology and sociology. **Section 1** introduces B&L's theory. **Section 2** provides an evaluation of B&L's theory at two levels, one as a sociolinguistic theory (in 2.1.) and the other in the wider cultural and academic context (in 2.2.). In 2.2., some problems surrounding the key notions of B&L's theory and its theory construction will be discussed. **Section 3** concludes the discussion.

1. Brown and Levinson's theory (1978 [1987])

1.0. Introduction to Brown and Levinson's theory

Brown and Levinson's *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* was first published in Goody (ed.) (1978) *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction* along with two papers on 'questions'. This seminal work on politeness has dominated the field ever since its publication. In 1987, B&L published the same paper as an independent book without any revision, but with the addition of a long introduction, in which they highlighted many issues raised by various researchers in the nine years since its first publication and attempted to provide supplementary comments, clarifications and defences of their original theory against criticisms of it. In this introduction, B&L also discussed recent developments in the field of politeness

including interdisciplinary studies involving linguistic politeness. It is important to give due weight to this introduction added in the 1987 edition as well as to their initial theory of politeness in 1978, in order to evaluate the ongoing development of their thinking.

B&L's main motive in presenting this book is to describe and account for the phenomenon of politeness, as they see extraordinary "parallelism in the linguistic minutiae of the utterance with which persons choose to express themselves in quite unrelated languages and culture" (1987:55). B&L argue that what they call 'rationality' is "the only satisfactory explanatory scheme" (ibid.) for such striking similarities across cultures. B&L (1987:56) list their subsidiary aims in the prologue:

1) "to identify some principles of a universal yet 'social' sort, and in so doing provide a possible social candidate for deeper functional pressures on the shape of grammars in general"

2) "to provide an antidote to the under-evaluation in the sociological sciences of the complexity of human being", "to draw the attention of social scientists to the richness and complexity of the assumptions and inferences upon the basis of which humans understand and cooperate with one another" and "to demonstrate the role of rationality, and its mutual assumptions by participants, in the derivation of inferences beyond the initial significance of word, tone and gesture"

3) to show that "sociolinguistics (to coin a slogan) ought to be applied pragmatics" out of their conviction that "to understand sociological aspects of language use one must first explore its systematics"

4) "to rebut the once-fashionable doctrine of cultural relativity in the field of interaction" and "to show that superficial diversities can emerge from underlying universal principles and are satisfactorily accounted for only in relation to them"

To summarise from the prologue, B&L's main aims are to discover the 'universal' yet 'social' principles of politeness phenomena and to propose a model that accounts for "the observed cross-cultural similarities in the abstract principles which underlie polite usage" (1987:57). They hope that this model will also serve as "a reference model for culturally specific usage" (ibid.) and "an ethnographic tool of great precision for

investigating the quality of social relations in any society" (ibid.). B&L (1987:59) attempted to substantiate their claim to universality by presenting data in first-hand tape-recordings from three unrelated languages: English (from both sides of the Atlantic); Tzeltal, a Mayan language in Mexico; and South Indian Tamil from Tamilnadu. This is supplemented by examples drawn from native speakers' introspections for English and by elicited data for Tzeltal and Tamil.

In **1.1.**, I will provides an in-depth exposition of the theory. As there have been many empirical studies based on B&L's theory, in **1.2.**, I will outline some major strands of post-Brown & Levinson development.

1.1. Politeness as universal yet social principles

(a). The fundamental assumptions of B&L's politeness theory

B&L's politeness theory is built upon the twin assumptions of 'rationality' and 'face', which are personified in a so-called universal Model Person (MP). The Model Person "consists in a wilful fluent speaker of a natural language, further endowed with two special properties — rationality and face (1987:58)." As they define it, 'rationality' is "a precisely definable mode of reasoning from ends to the means that will achieve those ends" (ibid.) and 'face' is two particular 'wants' that MP is endowed with, namely the want that his actions be unimpeded by others (negative want) and the want that his wants be desirable to at least some others (positive want). B&L (1987:61) redefined 'face' as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" which consists of

(a) negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction — i.e. freedom of action and freedom from imposition

(b) positive face: the positive consistent self-image or 'personality (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of)

claimed by interactants[53]

Besides their rather technical definition of 'face' as 'want', B&L (1987:61) also note that their notion of 'face' is "derived from that of Goffman (1967) and from the English folk term, which ties 'face' up with notions of being embarrassed, humiliated or 'losing face'" and that it is "something that is emotionally invested, that can be lost, maintained or enhanced and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (ibid.).[54] B&L assume that people cooperate with one another in maintaining each other's face in interaction, that is, "normally everyone's face depends on everyone else's being maintained, and since people can be expected to defend their face if threatened, and in defending their own to threaten each others' faces, it is in general in every participant's best interest to maintain each others' face" (ibid.).

(b). Face Threatening Acts (FTA)

Given these assumptions of the universality of 'face' and 'rationality', B&L argue that certain acts[55] intrinsically threaten face, and chose to term these *FTA* (Face Threatening Acts), namely those acts that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker" (1987:65). B&L (1987:65-68) construct two-way classifications of FTA, according to whether positive face or negative face is threatened and a two-way classification of when it is mainly the Speaker (S)'s face or the Hearer (H)'s face which is threatened, according to the nature of particular FTAs. (See

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53 B&L (1987: 285) state that their notion of positive and negative face is taken from Durkheim's (1915) 'positive and negative rites' and partially via Goffman. 'Negative rite' has an element of preventing undue mixing of the sacred and the profane, while 'positive rite' positively affirms the sacred representation constructed by society or religion. (See B&L 1987:43-44)

54 B&L's notion of face consisting of negative and positive wants is actually significantly different both from "the English folk term" and from Goffman's notion of face. This will be further considered later (in 2.2.2 (a) (b) and (c)) in this chapter.

55 In B&L's definition, 'act' means "what is intended to be done by a verbal or non-verbal communication, just as one or more 'speech acts' can be assigned to an utterance" (1987:65). Following Grice (1971): a communicative act is a chunk of behaviour B which is produced by S with a specific intention, which *S* intends H to recognize, this recognition being the communicative point of S's performing B.

Appendix 2-A for their four way cross-classification, which "has a complex relation to the ways in which FTAs are handled" (1987:68)).

(c). Politeness: strategies to minimize face threatening acts

B&L (1987 [1978]) define politeness as being forms of 'redressive' actions taken in order to counterbalance the potentially disruptive effect of FTAs. They propose three possible types of politeness strategies (**positive politeness, negative politeness** and **off-record**) (2, 3, 4 in the diagram below). B&L (1987:60) argue that the more an act threatens S's or H's face, the more *S* will want to choose a higher-numbered strategy in the following diagram. The Speaker (S) may choose to do the FTA baldly without any 'redressive' action, in case S's need to be efficient or urgent is greater than S's need (want) to maintain H's face. B&L define this as **bald on record** (1. in their diagram below).[56] On the contrary, when the risk of face loss is extremely great, a Speaker refrains from performing the FTA (5 in their diagram below).

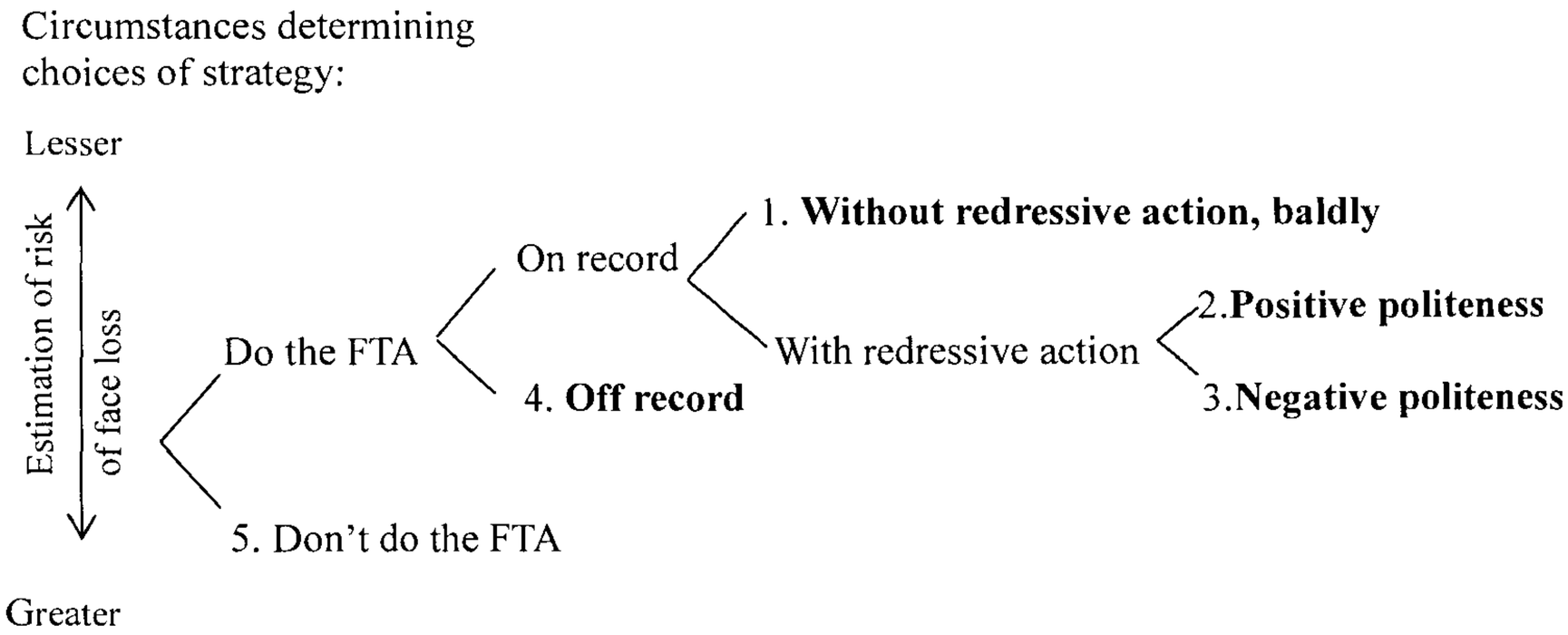

Fig. 2.1. Possible strategies for doing FTA (Face Threatening Acts) (B&L 1987:60)

The three politeness strategies are defined as follows:

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[56] Doing an act **baldly, without redress**, involves performing an FTA in the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way possible. S does this when the danger of H's face loss is small or in circumstances where S and H both agree that the relevance of face demands may be suspended in the interest of urgency.

Positive politeness (B&L 1987:70) is oriented towards the positive face of H, the positive self-image that he/she claims for himself/herself. "Positive politeness 'anoints'('butters up', in contemporary English parlance) the face of the addressee by indicating that in some respects, S wants what H wants....The potential face threat of an act is minimized by the assurance that in general S wants at least some of H's wants (ibid.70). (See Appendix 2-B for summary of positive strategies.)

Negative politeness (B&L 1987:70) is oriented mainly toward partially satisfying (redressing) H's negative face, his/her basic want to maintain claims of territory and self-determination. Negative politeness is essentially avoidance-based, and the realization of negative-politeness strategies consist in assurances that the speaker recognizes and respects the addressee's negative-face wants and will not (or will only minimally) interfere with the addressee's freedom of action. Hence negative-politeness is characterized by self-effacement, formality and restraint, with attention to very restricted aspects of H's self-image, centering on his want to be unimpeded. (See Appendix 2-C for summary of negative strategies)

Off record strategy is to perform an FTA indirectly. The Speaker "must give H some hints and hope that H picks up on them and thereby interprets what S really means (intends) to say. The basic way to do this is to invite conversational implicature by violating, in some way, the Gricean Maxims of efficient communication. (1987:213)". (See Appendix 2-D for summary of off-record strategies)

(d). Sociological variables for computing the weightiness of an FTA

B&L (1987:74) claim that the seriousness of any particular FTA involves the following sociological factors in many (and perhaps all) cultures. (S-speaker, H-hearer)

1. **Social distance (D) between S and H** (a symmetric relation)
   D is a symmetric social dimension of similarity/difference within which S and H stand for the purposes of this act.

2. **Relative power (P) that H has over S** (an asymmetric relation)
   P is an asymmetric social dimension of relative power. P(H,S) is the degree to which H can impose his own plans and his own self-evaluation (face) at the expense of S's plans and self-evaluation. In general there are two sources of P, either of which may be authorized or unauthorized – material control (over economic distribution and physical force) and metaphysical control (over the actions of others, by virtue of metaphysical forces subscribed to by those others). In most cases an individual's power is drawn from both these sources, or is thought to overlap them.

3. **Absolute ranking (R) of imposition in the particular culture**
   R is a culturally and situationally defined ranking of imposition by the degree to which they are considered to interfere with an agent's wants of self-determination or of approval (his negative- and positive- wants).

For each FTA, the seriousness or weightiness of FTA *x* is computed in the following equation (1987:76).

W*x*=D(S,H)+P(H,S)+R*x*

W*x*	numeral value that measures the weightiness of the FTAs
D(S,H)	the value that measures the social distance between S and H;
P(H,S)	a measure of the power that H has over S
R*x*	a value that measures the degree to which the FTA *x* is rated an imposition in that culture

(e). Universality and cultural variations

B&L (1987:243) claim that "the theory was couched in terms of individual acts, and presented a dyadic act-by-act account of strategic interaction". B&L (1987:244) made an *a priori* universal claim.

(i) The universality of face, describable as two kinds of wants
(ii) The potential universality of rational action devoted to satisfy others' face wants.
(iii) The universality of the mutual knowledge between interactants of (i) and (ii)

To these *a priori* claims B&L add a further claim based on observation of the actual use of sentences in context: that the seriousness of an FTA is assessed as a complex function of three variables, 'distance', 'power' and 'rating of imposition'. In other words the acts of individuals represent the gamut of strategies from 'bald on record', 'positive politeness', 'negative politeness' to 'indirectness' (off-record), depending on situational factors determining the W*x* (numeral value that measures the weightiness of the FTAs). B&L (1987:243), having built their theory on a universal claim of 'rationality' and 'face' still acknowledge that cultural variations exist, but then they claim that the differences lie in 'ethos', which they interpret as the affective quality of interaction characterizing groups, or social categories of persons, in a particular society. "In some societies interactional ethos is generally warm, easy-going, friendly; in others it is stiff, formal, deferential; in others it is characterized by displays of self-importance, bragging

and showing off (the Kwakiutl as reported by Benedict (1935), the Iatmul men as reported by Bateson (1958) in still others it is distant, hostile, suspicious (the Dobu as interpreted by Benedict (ibid.))" (1987:243).

B&L (1987:244-245) suggest the following apparatus to describe cross-cultural variations.

(i) The general level of W*x* in a culture, as determined by the sum of P, D and R values.
(ii) The extent to which all acts are FTAs and the particular kinds of acts that are FTAs in a culture
(iii) The cultural composition of W*x*; the varying values (and thus importance) attached to P, D and Rx and the different sources for their assessment.
(iv) Different modes of assignment of members to the sets of persons whom an actor wants to pay him positive face, and the extent to which those sets are extended; are the relevant persons a highly limited and restricted class, or are they (or some of them) an extensive set?
(v) The nature and distribution of strategies over the most prominent dyadic relations in a particular society; are they distributed symmetrically? Asymmetrically? in particular configurations?

B&L assume that types of social relationship are repetitive throughout a society, i.e. there is a constancy or a stability in such relationships, which can be assessed by D and P in B&L's formula above. Since the assessment of P and D crucially determine W*x* which in turn regulates the choice of politeness strategy, B&L argue that it is possible to generalise about the kinds of politeness that are typically employed by members of that society in public. In other words, stability in social relations in any particular culture provides the explanation of regularities in interactional strategies. B&L, assuming the universality of rationality and face, interpret politeness as an individual's (Model Person's) rational action of employing face-saving strategies in dyadic interaction. As mentioned earlier, B&L acknowledge that cultural variations arise from the 'ethos' of a particular society or culture and deal with them in their W*x* formula. B&L argue that their theory considers "a correlation between D and P levels in a society and the kind and amount of face attention" (1987:244). B&L, however, make sure that cultural

(emic) explanations of cross-cultural differences do not supersede explanation in terms of universal (etic) social dimension, like D and P in their theory. Understood this way, the Model Person in B&L's theory remains a rational independent actor, who freely chooses various politeness strategies based on his/her calculation of W*x*. As B&L's theory was couched in terms of individual acts, I observe that the individual or social actor is emphasised and social constraints, which lie in ethos are downplayed as one variable for rational calculation of W*x*.[57] The social actor and the social structure are skilfully separated in B&L's theory. I will return to this discussion later (in 2.1.2.) in this chapter.

1.2. Post-B&L Development

The publication of B&L's theory influenced the whole field and inspired researchers to carry out a variety of studies. I will introduce some major strands of Post-B&L development of politeness studies. Post-B&L studies inherited both the strengths and weaknesses of B&L's theory, so they will be evaluated in the next section as part of the evaluation of B&L's theory.

First, there have been a number of empirical studies including comparisons of different types of speech acts in various cultural contexts. An important collection of contributions on cross-cultural differences in the realisation of speech acts is *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies* (1989) edited by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper. The researchers in this Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) used the Discourse Completion Test (DCT)[58] and analysed the

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[57] Mills (2003:101-2) also challenged the assumption that social variables in B&L's theory are stable and computable. She argues that they are constantly negotiated during each interaction (See *Ch.4.* 4.3).

[58] The test consists of scripted dialogues that represent socially differentiated situations. Each dialogue is preceded by a short description of the situation, specifying the setting, and the social distance between the participants and their status relative to each other, followed by an incomplete dialogue. Respondents were asked to complete the dialogue, thereby providing the speech act aimed at (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989b:13-14).

elicited data with the CCSARP coding manual they developed.[59] The development of this coding manual accelerated similar cross-cultural comparisons in realisation of speech acts.[60] Interlocutors in certain cultures prefer to use more negative politeness strategies under the same controlled contextual features or vice versa (cf. B&L 1987:243-246). Some cross-cultural empirical studies confirm that the level of directness in speech act realisation differs according to culture. For instance, House and Kasper (1981) revealed that German speakers tend to realise requests and complaints more directly than English speakers. Blum-Kulka (1983) showed that Hebrew speakers are more direct in requests than English speakers. Such cross-cultural comparisons have remained as popular themes for many PhD theses in politeness studies for the last two decades (e.g. Sifianou 1987; Placencia 1991; Spencer-Oatey, 1992; Fukushima 1999; Reiter 1999; Intachakra 2001; Economidou-Kogetsidis 2003; Hatipoglu, 2003; Menasan 2004).

Second, politeness phenomena have been investigated in different contexts. Politeness has become a truly interdisciplinary subject of study, discussed in business (e.g. Bargiela-Chiappiani & Harris 1996; Van Waes and van Wijk 2001; Chakorn 2002; Jung 2003; White et al. 2004), education (e.g. Li 2000), politics (e.g. Harris 2001) judicial studies (e.g. Kurzon 2001), media (e.g. Mullany 1998), medicine (e.g. Lambert 1996) and translation/interpreting (e.g. Hickey 2001; Krouglov 1999; Monacelli 2005). In terms of data collection, corpora of naturally occurring data (e.g. Jung 2003, Monacelli 2005) have often been used in many of these studies.

Third, there has been some research concerning the acquisition of politeness.

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[59] Detailed coding instructions are found in Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper (1989a:273-294) and Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984: 196-213)

[60] Requests, (e.g. Blum-Kulka 1987; Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989a; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984, Sifianou 1992; Rinnert and Kobayashi 1999; Fukushima 1996, 1999, 2002), apologies (e.g. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984; Vollmer and Olshtain 1989; Obeng 1999; Okamura and Wei 2000; Suszczynska 1999; Wouk 2006), compliments (e.g. Mursy and Wilson 2001; Lorenzo-Dus 2001; Spencer-Oatey, Ng & Dong 2000; Golato 2003; Yu 2003) and thanks (e.g. Eisenstein and Bodman 1993; Kumatoridani 1999).

Some studies are on the L1 acquisition of politeness through socialisation (e.g. Clancy 1986; Snow et al 1990; Axia 1993; Ladegaard 2004) and others are on the L2 learner's acquisition of pragmatic competences (e.g. Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993a; Kasper and Schmidt 1996; Hinkel 1992). In interlanguage pragmatics, where theoretical and empirical foundations derive from cross-cultural pragmatics, researchers have focused particularly on the illocutionary and politeness dimensions of speech act performance (e.g. Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993; Olshtain and Weinbach 1993; Takahashi and Beebe 1993; Trosborg 1995; Gass and Houck 1999; Felix-Brasdefer 2004). There has been a focus on "learners' inappropriate speech realization in order to uncover their pragmatic knowledge at a given time in their learning process" (e.g. Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper 1989b). Thomas (1983) reveals that even fairly advanced learners fail to convey or comprehend the intended illocutionary force of politeness values.

Fourth, there has been an increasing number of politeness studies on the issue of gender (e.g. Holmes 1995, 2005; Mills 2002, 2003; Hobbs 2003; Kendall 2004: SturtzSreetharan 2006), of class (Kleiner 1996; Mills 2004) and of power (Locher 2004).

Fifthly and finally, a recent development is consideration of impoliteness (e.g. Culpeper 1996; Zamora 2000; Harris 2001; Culpeper 1996; Culpeper et al 2003; Bousfield & Locher forthcoming.). In July 3-4, 2006, the very first conference on impoliteness/ rudeness "Linguistic impoliteness and rudeness: confrontation and conflict in discourse" was held at Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.

2. Evaluation of B&L's politeness theory

2.1. B&L's theory as a sociolinguistic theory

While Lakoff and Leech included politeness as an extension of conversational maxims,

B&L understood politeness to be a motivating force for deviating from Grice's maxims. As B&L recognised that principles of language use are inseparable from the principles of social relationships, they aimed to elucidate 'universal' yet 'social' principles of politeness in their theory. B&L focused on language users and their motivation for using politeness. Their theory was the first serious consideration of politeness from a social psychological perspective. For a variety of reasons, B&L made a huge contribution to politeness studies. Their theory has dominated the field and many empirical studies followed which were based upon it. In this section, I will first explore reasons why B&L's theory became so popular in the field (in **2.1.1.**). Then I will indicate some of the inadequacies of B&L's approach as a sociolinguistic theory (in **2.1.2.**).

2.1.1. Popularity of B&L's theory

Since its first publication, B&L's theory has become the dominant theory in politeness studies and has been influential not only among researchers of linguistic related disciplines such as sociolinguistics or pragmatics, who are drawing more and more upon sociology and anthropology, but also among researchers of other disciplines such as social psychology or intercultural communication.[61] So why has B&L's theory gained such popularity?

First, the notion of 'negative' and 'positive' politeness seemed to be particularly appealing to many researchers. These two kinds of politeness correspond to two sides of face: 'negative face': the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction i.e. freedom of action and freedom from imposition and 'positive face': the positive consistent self-image or 'personality (crucially including the

[61] e.g. Holtgraves 2001, Holtgraves 1997, Holtgraves 1997, Holtgraves 1992, Holtgraves & Yang 1990 (social psychology); Ting-Toomey 1988, Ting-Toomey, and Kurogi 1998 (intercultural communication)

desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants[62]. Many people probably welcomed B&L's two notions of 'face-wants' because they could relate to or feel resonance with these two fundamental psychological needs. Different researchers have acknowledged these two types of interactional needs. Scollon and Scollon (1995:36) expressed it as follows:

> On the one hand, in human interactions we have a need to be involved with other participants and to show them our involvement. On the other hand, we need to maintain some degree of independence from other participants and to show them that we respect their independence.

Tannen (1989) called these interactional needs 'involvement' and 'distance' and Scollon and Scollon (1983, 1995) labelled them as 'solidarity' and 'deference'. Hirschon (2001) used 'sociability' and 'autonomy' and Janny and Arndt (1992) called them 'interpersonal face' and 'personal face'. These two aspects may not be necessarily two aspects of 'face' as B&L claimed, but they are probably two fundamental social psychological needs or desires common to all human beings. B&L skilfully combined these desires with the notion of 'face' and created a technical notion of 'face-wants' Because many were able to identify with these social psychological needs, although they may not necessarily agree that they are two sides of 'face', I believe that this made B&L's 'negative' and 'positive' face popular.

Second, B&L's theory construction is clear-cut and suitable for empirical studies and cross-cultural comparisons whereas Lakoff's rules of politeness and Leech's politeness maxims are not in a format which can be easily tested or applied. Thomas (1995:168) commented that Leech's maxims may be used as an inventory for various social-psychological constraints influencing the choices made within the pragmatic

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[62] It should be noted that these two types of politeness (politeness by keeping distance from the addressee and politeness by being close to the addressee) are not new in B&L's theory. Lakoff (1973), prior to B&L, had already mentioned 'Distance' (Rule 1): 'Don't impose' and Camaraderie (Rule 3): Make A feel good – be friendly'; 'Distance' (Rule 1) corresponds to 'negative politeness' and Camaraderie (Rule 3) corresponds to 'positive politeness'.

parameters (See *Ch.1* 2.2.2.). However, because of the arbitrariness of his categories, they are not very suitable for empirical studies. B&L's theory, on the other hand, has clear-cut and concise constructs (positive politeness, negative politeness and off-record strategies) and this attracted researchers who wished to conduct empirical studies. Preference for positive politeness, negative politeness and off-record strategies in B&L's theory has been examined by controlling the variables of D(S,H), P(H,S) and R*x* (See 1.1.(d)., this chapter). Cross cultural comparisons of politeness strategies have also been made using the inventory of strategies in B&L's theory and other empirical studies were carried out by controlling the variables D, P and R*x*.

Third, B&L's theory of politeness attracts researchers because of its universal claims. If one recollects that the subtitle of their book is '*some universals* in language usage', B&L's intention may not actually have been to create a comprehensive universal theory of politeness aimed at explaining all politeness phenomena in all languages and cultural contexts. B&L's definition of politeness as 'redressive' actions taken in order to counterbalance the potentially disruptive effect of face threatening acts may not be the one and only possible definition of politeness, but it can be seen as a limited definition within their theory in order to explain some seemingly 'universal' aspects of politeness phenomena. Still, even though the theory may only explicate *some* universals in politeness phenomena, because of its claim to universality, the theory appeals to researchers, because it allows them to conduct empirical research testing universal applicability. A universal theory and empirical research are buzzwords for modernist scientific disciplines. Thus I believe that B&L's theory of politeness has gained popularity among many researchers because it fulfilled the requirements of an acceptable theory regarded as modern science. I will discuss this issue further in Chapter 3.

2.1.2. Some inadequacies in B&L's theory

While many researchers wholeheartedly embraced B&L's theory and carried out various empirical studies, others criticised B&L's theory at certain points. Many of their criticisms are directed against the basic assumptions of B&L's theory, namely the so-called 'Model Person', and 'face', which were challenged particularly by non-Anglo-Saxon researchers, but in this section, I temporarily overlook the criticism of major philosophical problems surrounding these key notions or assumptions in B&L's theory and instead focus on more descriptive sociolinguistic inadequacies in the theory. I will come back to more general philosophical problems with these underlying assumptions in **2.2.**

First, B&L's theory is a Speaker's production model of politeness. In the speaker-hearer interactional dyad, in which B&L placed politeness, there should be two sides to politeness: the production of particular behaviours by a speaker and the corresponding perception and evaluation of those behaviours by a hearer. B&L chose to formulate their theory as the Model Person's production model of politeness, seeing politeness from the perspective of the Speaker. Consequently, B&L's theory does not provide any idea of how the Hearer actually perceives or evaluates politeness. Eelen (2001:96) rightly points out that "politeness is primarily conceptualised as a form of speaker behaviour rather than hearer evaluation." The assessment of the weightiness of FTAs is also looked at from the perspective of the Speaker. However, the Speaker's intention of expressing politeness is often misinterpreted by the Hearer, because the Hearer assesses the Speaker's utterance based upon the Hearer's criteria of assessment, which may be different from the Speaker's. The Speaker's intention is not always accurately perceived by the Hearer. At times the Speaker may feel like saying to the

Hearer, "You've got hold of the wrong end of the stick". In any comprehensive study of politeness, the Hearer's perspective ought to be afforded an equally important place to the Speaker's and the gap between the intention of the Speaker and the Hearer's evaluation of the Speaker's utterance should be considered.[63]

Second, interactants are not just rational beings, as is assumed in B&L's theory. B&L (1987:71) argue that any rational agent tends to choose the same genus of strategy under the same conditions – that is, make the same moves as any other person would make under the same circumstances, because they assume that particular strategies intrinsically afford certain payoffs or advantages, and the relevant circumstances are those in which one of these payoffs would be more advantageous than any other. It is assumed here somewhat gratuitously that all human beings tend to make the same choices because they are equally 'rational'. Kopytko (1995) argues that such deductive reasoning in an interaction is untenable, stressing that the Speaker is envisaged as "a deterministic device, or an abstract concept devoid of attitudes, personality" (1995:487). B&L seem to have assumed that cultural variations in choice of strategies lie only in differences of ethos and that they are all measurable in social variables in W*x* (Power, Distance and Imposition of FTA in particular cultures). However, in real life situations, besides general cultural variations, we would anticipate some individual variability in the choice of strategies even within the same culture or social context.

There are also differences which might arise from the gender, or class of the Speaker and/or the Hearer (Mills 2003, Holmes 1988, 1995), which potentially may have an enormous impact on the way politeness is expressed. The interactional history between any particular Speaker and Hearer built up over previous encounters or their respective psychological states might also influence both the Speaker's choice of politeness strategies and the Hearer's interpretation of the Speaker's utterances. B&L's

[63] The Hearer's evaluative practice will be explored in the final chapter (Conclusion).

MP does not seem capable of accommodating such variations; the MP is endowed with rationality and face. B&L focused on the alleged similarities between politeness phenomena in unrelated languages across cultures and tried to identify universal elements. But striking differences may also be observed even between two interlocutors from within the same culture, as well as between those from widely differing cultures.

Third, B&L's theory deals with short stretches of conversational exchange which contain certain 'acts'. For B&L, 'act' means "what is intended to be done by a verbal or non-verbal communication, just as one or more 'speech acts' can be assigned to an utterance" (1987:65). Following Grice (1971), B&L also defined that "a communicative act is a chunk of behaviour B which is produced by S with a specific intention, which S intends H to recognize, this recognition being the communicative point of S's doing B" (1987: 286). In any naturally occurring conversation, however, interaction consists of a longer stretch of conversational sequence, involving alterations of initial communication strategies in accordance with the reaction of the Hearer, repair mechanisms etc.[64]A single utterance consonant with the Speaker's original intention of certain acts is very rare. Thus B&L did not, in fact, adequately explain such naturally occurring conversational data.[65]

Fourth, as B&L define politeness as strategies for minimising face-threatening acts, their theory is not geared to situations where the face-threats have already taken place. Suppose that a Speaker chooses an appropriate strategy which he/she thought would minimize the face-threat to the Hearer. Despite the Speaker's polite intention, there may be situations in which the Hearer becomes offended, perhaps because the

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[64] Conversation Analysts (e.g. Schegloff 1972, Schegloff and Sacks 1973, Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974) analyse longer stretches of conversational sequence with the assumption that "a) interaction is structurally organised; b) contributions to interaction are contextually oriented; c) these two properties inhere in the details of interaction so that no order of detail can be dismissed, a priori, as disorderly, accidental, or irrelevant" (Heritage 1984:241 quoted in Schiffrin 1994:236).

[65] B&L admitted this problem in the long preface section, when their paper was independently published as a book *Politeness: Some universals in language use* in 1987. However the main text remains the same as the original 1978 paper.

Hearer interprets the Speaker's utterance differently from the Speaker's intention. As B&L see politeness as strategies for minimising potential face loss, i.e. 'preventive measures' against possible disruptive relationship caused by face loss, B&L's theory fails to deal equally well with the situation once face-loss has already occurred. However, there must be utterances aimed at enhancing or restoring the face of the Hearer, even though damaging the Hearer's face was never intended in the first place. B&L interpret almost all acts as being 'face-threatening acts. Even such an act as an apology, which could be interpreted as remedial work following disruption of relationships, B&L try to understand as a 'face-threatening act' and explain what kind of face is threatened. B&L, however, did not see it in this way. Some researchers objected to such an emphasis upon 'threat'. Nwoye (1992:311) comments that in B&L's theory, human interaction becomes "an activity of continuous mutual monitoring of potential threat to the faces of the interactants, and of devising strategies for maintaining the interactants' faces – a view that if always true, could rob social interaction of all elements of pleasure". Schmidt (1980:104) describes B&L's theory as embodying "an overly pessimistic, rather paranoid view of human social interaction."

Fifth, in B&L' theory, the Model Person is assumed to be able to make free choices of politeness based on computing Wx, the numeral value that measures FTA. However, interlocutors are often caught up in asymmetrical power relationships, which limit their choice of strategies. B&L consider P (H,S), "a measure of the power that H(Hearer) has over S(Speaker) (1987:76)". Though B&L recognise that Power plays a significant role in choosing particular politeness strategies, B&L portray the MP as a rational free-agent who can freely claim his/her negative and positive face wants. The Power element is perceived as one of the variables for computing W*x* but not as a factor which disadvantages the interlocutors in their choice of politeness strategies. But in

reality the less powerful tend to have far fewer choices of strategies, because they are expected to show respect to the powerful. This means that a single hypothesised Model Person cannot possibly fully represent both the powerful and the less powerful. Also the evaluation of politeness, which B&L failed to explain in their theory, is often not neutral either. The dominant person in any society tends to determine what is polite or appropriate and the less dominant individual's evaluation may not be able to use the same criteria for judgement or assessment at all. Thus, power and politeness are inevitably intertwined with each other. Such social and cultural reality is downplayed as an external variable for computing W*x* because of their theory's emphasis on the rational choice of the Model Person.

Finally, as some researchers (e.g. Culpeper 1996; Eelen 2001) *have pointed out, B&L's theory does not include any consideration of* ***im****-politeness in their framework.* Culpeper (1996:350) argues that, in order for a theory of politeness to be comprehensive, it is integral that the topic of linguistic impoliteness should also be addressed. Eelen (2001: 102) argues that if face wants were to account for impoliteness in the same way as politeness, they would need to include the want not to satisfy one's own face-wants, which is a contradiction in terms. Despite acknowledgements that FTAs can be performed without redress on some occasions (in urgent situations or when face-threat is minimal), B&L's model still does not account for the fact that their concept of face wants cannot explain their own non-fulfilment. (ibid.) Mullany (1999) refers to the case of political interviews, where it is not in the interests of participants to pay mutual attention to each other's face needs. The centrality of the preservation of face needs in B&L's theory means that it does not appear to account for confrontational discourse where ignoring the addressees' face needs and attacking their position is a frequent and indeed expected occurrence. Failure to pay attention to the face needs of fellow

interlocutors does not result in conversational breakdown in political interviews, as would be anticipated in B&L's theory.

2.2. Evaluation of B&L's theory in the wider cultural and academic context

B&L chose to approach politeness from the perspective of individual interactants, and proposed a Model Person (MP) endowed with two properties, 'rationality' and 'face'. B&L argued that 'rationality' and 'face' provide universal motivation for using politeness strategies and built their entire theory on these assumptions. For them 'politeness' consists of redressive actions that the Speaker uses for minimising the effects of face-threatening acts. These basic assumptions in B&L's theory, particularly the Model Person and B&L's notion of 'face' have been criticised by non-Anglo-Saxon researchers in particular. They argue that the MP represents a Western individualistic construct of 'self' and that 'face' in B&L's theory is also individualistic, different from their notions of 'face' and that B&L's politeness does not sufficiently explain the politeness phenomena of the interaction in more collectivistic societies such as Japan, China, or Nigeria.

I contend that the difficulty with B&L's theory is not only due to ethnocentric theory construction assuming a Western individualistic notion of self, but the problem also derives from the philosophical presuppositions of modern theory to which B&L subscribe. In the academic climate of post-modernity, the limitation of such theory construction has come to be acknowledged. Therefore B&L's theory needs to be evaluated not only in the wider cultural context, but also in the wider academic context of Modernity—Post-modernity. In this section, I will revisit typical criticisms of B&L's Model Person (in **2.2.1.**) and their notion of 'face' (in **2.2.2.**) and reinvestigate them from the perspective of modernist theory construction.

2.2.1. The Model Person in B&L's theory

(a). Western individualism assumed in B&L's Model Person

B&L's definition of the Model Person (MP) is brief. The Model Person "consists in a wilful fluent speaker of a natural language, further endowed with two special properties – rationality and face" (1987:58). The MP in B&L's theory seems to come across as being an 'autonomous', 'rational' and 'calculative' self. The MP rationally measures social variables in W*x* (Power, Distance and Imposition) and chooses those strategies which give the highest pay-offs to the individual so that the potential face damage of Face Threatening Acts may be minimised. This strategic action of the MP is defined as 'politeness' in this theory.

Some (mainly non-Anglo-Saxon) researchers (Ide 1989, Matsumoto 1988, Gu 1990, Mao1994, Nwoye 1992) have criticised the assumption of Western individualism behind B&L's MP. They criticise that in the name of this allegedly 'rational' 'universal' model person, an entirely Western individualistic model of self has been constructed. Why is their criticism significant? Because MP's strategic action of politeness in B&L's theory could end up being interpreted as 'impolite' behaviour in a collectivist society! The self in group-oriented or collectivistic societies sees himself/herself as part of one or more collectives (family, co-workers, tribes, nation) and emphasises connectedness to other members and is expected to give priority to the goals of these collectives rather than to his/her own personal goals. To be 'polite' in these societies is to maintain harmony with others and <u>not</u> to seek one's own goals. It is directly opposite to the MP's insistence on satisfying his own individual wants or rationally calculating the highest pay-offs as in B&L's theory. From the perspective of a person from collectivistic societies, the MP's calculative strategic action aiming for the highest pay-offs is far

from being polite, but is regarded as self-seeking and thoroughly impolite behaviour! Therefore a different depiction of self leads to a totally different perception of what constitutes genuine politeness. What is polite in one society may be considered impolite in another. Researchers from collectivistic societies find it impossible to understand how such self-seeking, calculative strategic actions aiming for the highest pay-offs can be an adequate explanation of true politeness.

Politeness is perceived very differently in such collectivistic societies due to their different model of self. A Japanese researcher Ide (1989) argues that B&L's theory focused on *volitional* strategies of politeness and failed to acknowledge the aspect of what she described as *wakimae* (discernment).

> To behave according to *wakimae* is to show verbally and non-verbally one's sense of place or role in a given situation according to social conventions. In a stable society, an individual is expected to behave according to the status and the role of various levels ascribed to or acquired by that individual. To acknowledge the delicate status and/or the role differences of the speaker, the addressee and the referent in communication is essential to keep communication smooth and without friction. Thus to observe *wakimae* by means of language use is an integral part of linguistic politeness. The closest equivalent of term for *wakimae* in English is discernment (Hill et al. 1986:347-348). (1989: 230)

Ide (1989) points out that in Japanese language, politeness as a social marking system as demonstrated in honorific systems is always socio-pragmatically obligatory even for non-FTA utterance. Thus she argues (1989:239) that politeness is better explained, not as the speaker's volitional choice, but rather as the speaker's observation of conventional rules of politeness to show *wakimae* (discernment).[66] Matsumoto (1988) also claims that politeness expressions in Japanese are triggered by social stratification rather than by the need for redressing FTAs as B&L claimed. She showed that every

[66] Ervin-Tripp, Nakamura & Guo (1995) discovered that appropriate behaviour in Asian countries such as China, Korea, Japan, etc. has to be judged in terms of the relations and mutual obligations of speaker and hearer, within their own communities, and not because speaker and hearer mutually want to fulfil their face-wants (negative face and positive face) as rights, as in an individualistic society.

predicate in Japanese could have an implication of politeness by the choice of polite/non-polite forms (as we saw in the examples of various versions of 'Today is Saturday' in 1.1.(d) in the previous chapter). Matsumoto and Ide are not convinced that such typological characteristics of Japanese language, which has explicit devices for social indexing (or discerning one's own place in a given social situation, i.e. *wakimae*) can be simply subsumed under one of the negative politeness strategies such as 'Give deference' in B&L's face-saving theory of politeness, because such linguistic devices are used even in non-FTAs and therefore it follows logically that they are not exclusively devices for redressing FTAs.[67]

Criticism of such Western ethnocentric constructs of self in modern theory has not been directed only at B&L's theory. Interestingly, in many disciplines since the 1980s there have been similar criticisms that the individualistic conception of personhood has been blindly assumed in much Western universal rationalist theory construction. In sociology, Hofstede (1980) demonstrated forty nations' cultural differences in work-related values using four dimensions: 1) power distance, 2) individualism, 3) uncertainty avoidance and 4) masculinity.[68] This seminal publication has inspired many researchers in different disciplines to investigate the impact that differences such as the individualistic vs. collectivist perception of self may have on cognition, decision-making, and interactional patterns.

In psychology, Markus and Kitayama (1991, 1994) made a similar point. They

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[67] Several researchers (Fukushima 2002; Usami 2002; Pizziconi 2003; Fukada and Asato 2004) contested Matsumoto and/or Ide's arguments and defended B&L's theory. Fukushima (2002) claims that what Matsumoto and Ide are discussing are sociolinguistic aspects of the Japanese language and that they are not significant pragmatically. Tsuruta (1998 discussed in Spencer-Oatey 2000) argues that B&L's model deals primarily with 'illocutionary politeness', whereas Matsumoto's discussion of honorifics deals primarily with 'stylistic' politeness, each belonging to different 'domains' of politeness.

[68] Hofstede's analysis involves samples of more than 100,000 IBM employees in 40 nations. He factor-analysed the resulting culture scores of 32 items from each for the 40 national samples and then isolated four dimensions of cultural variation: power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity. Each of the 40 nations was then assigned four separate scores (out of 100) for each dimension. U.S.A. was top in rank in individualism (91) and Great Britain was the third (89), whereas Japan was the 22nd (46), therefore placed in the middle of the 40 nations.

pointed out that "what psychologists currently know about human nature is based on one particular view – the so called Western view of the individual as an independent, self-contained, autonomous entity" (1991:224) and questioned the existence of any culture-free aspects of cognition, emotion and motivation, which had often been assumed in psychology. They argued that the Asian self, which is 'interdependently construed' (insisting on the fundamental relatedness of individuals to one another and harmonious interdependence with them), is very distinct from the European or US self, which is 'independently construed' (seeking to maintain their independence from others) and that such different individual experiences include cognition, emotion and motivation (ibid.).[69] The ideologies of each construct of personhood are often described as 'individualism' and 'collectivism'.[70] Many empirical studies followed and different scales for measuring individualism and collectivism have been developed (e.g. Triandis 1995; Singelis 1994).[71] Other researchers from cultural psychology, cultural

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[69] However, the polarity of 'independent self' and 'interdependent self' or the polarity of 'individualism' and 'collectivism' have also been criticised as being too simplistic and deterministic. Lindholm (1997) argues that Markus and Kitayama's (1991) claim has logical flaws. The 'interdependent self' changes as it adjusts to the norm and demands of the social context, so that this self cannot be the controlling agent. So he questions: where is the controlling agent? Is a 'culture' the controlling agent? Lindholm (1997:408) argues that surely there must be a conscious internal agent monitoring and governing the experience of emotion. He argues that differing actions, beliefs and motivations of individuals in the East and West are not due to a mysterious 'self', but due to reasonable and predictable responses to divergent patterns of power and constraint. Spiro (1993:116) argues that the dichotomy of Western and Eastern self is inadequate as an account of such a complex concept of self. He claims that it is more reasonable to think that both elements exist in various societies and that they should been seen more as a spectrum of tendencies. One or another of these characteristics "is more likely" to be found in one type, rather than the other: the difference between them is only one of degree.

[70] Triandis (1995) defines individualism as "a social pattern that consist of loosely linked individuals who view themselves as independent of collectives; are primarily motivated by their own preferences, needs, rights, and the contracts they have established with others; give priority to their personal goals over the goals of others; and emphasize rational analyses of the advantages and disadvantages to associating with others (1995:2)". Collectivism is defined as a "social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who see themselves as parts of one or more collectives (family, co-workers, tribes, nation); are primarily motivated by the norms of, and duties imposed by, those collectivists; are willing to give priorities to the goals of these collectives over their own personal goals; and emphasize their connectedness to members of their collectives (1995:2)." Foley (1997:266) calls these two polar constructions of personhood as the 'egocentric individualist concept of the person' and the 'sociocentric context dependent conception of personhood'

[71] Researchers of intercultural communication (Ting-Toomey 1988; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi 1998) proposed a Face-Negotiation theory, using the notion of face and the dimension of individualism-collectivism to explicate everyday communication behaviour across culture. Ting-Toomey & Kurogi (1998:188) define face as 'social self' and 'facework' as "a set of communicative behaviour

anthropology and linguistic anthropology (Geertz 1973, Kondo 1990; Rosaldo 1984; Shweder and Bourne 1984; Wierzbicka 1993) have also paid considerable attention to cross-cultural differences in the construction of personhood.

The model of a person which is universal and neutral as suggested in B&L's theory and in modern psychology seems to have lost the perspective or psychological experience of the actual person who functions in a particular society or culture. The psychological experiences of those who come from a culture which has a strong collectivistic nature seem to be very different from those who come from a more individualistic culture. For those who come from a collectivistic culture, the pressure to conform to the society is so great and the sanction for not conforming is so imminent that they feel that the Western individualistic self, which is able to make rational calculations and free decisions, does not adequately represent the psychological tension which they experience everyday in their society. A Japanese proverb *'deru kui wa utareru'* (The nail that sticks up will get hammered in!) depicts the pressure to conform to society and the fear of possible social sanction for failing to do so.[72]

(b). B&L's Model Person – modernity's self

As discussed above, B&L's Model Person has been criticised for being ethnocentric assuming the Western individualistic construal of self to be the universal construal of self. Though the Western individualistic construct of self appear to be assumed in the

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that people use to regulate their social dignity and to support or challenge the other's social dignity". They argue that face and facework are universal phenomena, but how people frame the meaning of face in any given situation and how they enact 'facework', differs from one culture to another. They argue that individualistic (I-identity) cultures and group-oriented (we-identity) cultures use different 'facework' strategies.

[72] Shimizu (2001) perceives that individualistic and sociocentric elements are in a state of tension, but at the same time they complement each other in such a way that to achieve the purpose of each (e.g. to be individuated) to make it conditional to the other (e.g., to participate, be part of the collective) (2001:207). Shimizu's depiction of the Japanese self which existentially tries to transcend the tension between sociocentric pressures and the urge for individuation is helpful in understanding personhood in a collectivistic culture. Much Japanese drama is based on the conflict between social duties (*giri*, *gimu*) and personal aims and desires.

universal Model Person as in various criticisms, I contend that the Model Person was meant to be just a model for theoretical purposes and it was not intended to carry any particular psychological property or cultural trait. Rather, the Model Person in B&L's theory can be traced to 'modernity's self', which is presupposed in assumptions in *modernist* theory construction. In fact, the term 'rationality', a catchword for *modernist* thinking, is used to justify this Model Person as the representation of all human beings. (See Section 3 in the *Introduction* chapter for the *modernist* view of man as an 'autonomous rational subject'. This will be discussed further in 1.1. in Chapter 3.) Klages's description below of modernity's self shows a striking resemblance to the Model Person in B&L's theory.

> - There is a stable, coherent, knowable self. This self is conscious, rational, autonomous, and universal -- no physical conditions or differences substantially affect how this self operates.
> - This self knows itself and the world through reason, or rationality, posited as the highest form of mental functioning, and the only objective form.
> - The mode of knowing produced by the objective rational self is "science," which can provide universal truths about the world, regardless of the individual status of the knower.
>
> (Klages 2003)[73]

Modernity's self is 'rational', 'autonomous' and 'universal' and assumed to know the world 'objectively' with 'rationality'.

Luntley (1995:155) points out another characteristic of the modernity's self: "[t]he self is constituted by an essence that can be characterised independently of contingent historical circumstances; history, culture, social, moral and political relationships are all extrinsic possessions of the self, not constitutive of the self".[74] He

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[73] The original source of this is Jane Flax's basic ideas of the Enlightenment in "Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory," in Linda J. Nicholson, (ed.), *Feminism/Postmodernism*, Routledge, 1990, p.41. Klages' summary contains nine points. I listed the first three which are about the model of self in the Enlightenment idea. See http://www.colorado.edu/English/courses/ENGL2012Klages/pomo.html

[74] This kind of modern concept of the self comes from the philosophical position of metaphysical individualism.

states that culture, relationship, and social position are all the possessions of self, but the modernity's self is not itself constituted by culture, history or its relationship with others. I contend that B&L formulated the MP in line with modernity's self model, which is not supposed to be constituted by culture, social or moral and political relationship as in the above description.[75] The modernity's self may resemble the Western individualistic personhood, perhaps because the model was constructed in the academic world in which Western individualism has been the dominant discourse.

Luntley (1995:164) also describes modernity's self as the calculating satisfier of its own desires. The self uses rationality to evaluate "outcomes relative to satisfying one desire rather than another" and to produce the greatest pay-off between resources expended in undertaking the action and benefit achieved by the action.

> Given an end, such as the maximisation of desire satisfaction, rationality will evaluate the means to that end. The rational self turns out to be the calculating satisfier of desires governed only by an instrumental rationality that measures means-end relationship. (Luntley 1995:164)

Our ends are embedded in our desires and they are not subject to rational evaluation. So the only thing that rationality can measure is the choice of means to meet our ends (ibid.). This is the model of *homo economicus* (economical man), the possessor of basic desires and drives whose rationality is restricted to the weighing and measuring of the satisfaction of achieving one's own desires. I claim that B&L's explanation of 'payoffs' associated with each of the politeness strategies matches the above description of modernity's self model, the rational *homo economicus*. Indeed, B&L explicitly declare that they take in the Weberian term, the most strongly rational *zweckrational* model of

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[75] Alternatively, social constructionists claim that Self cannot be separated from society and is socially constituted. The person who is socialised in a particular community becomes inculcated within its social structure and this socialisation process influences the person's cognition, emotion, and decision-making. Taking this view, it is impossible to produce a coherent model of a culturally- (or socially)-neutral "rational" person.

individual action rather than a *wertrational* model (1987:62).[76]

The idea that the self, who is rational, autonomous, goal-oriented, and calculative, makes choices which gives him/her the highest pay-offs is known as a 'rational choice theory'. This theory derives from modern economics and has become popular in other modern social sciences. Scott (2000:136) summarises the basic points of a rational choice theory.

- Rational choice theory…attempts to explain all social phenomena in terms of the rational calculations made by self-interested individuals.
- Rational choice theory sees social interaction as social exchange modelled on economic action. People are motivated by the rewards and costs of actions and by the profits that they can make.

As stated, B&L's Model Person (MP), which is supposed to provide a reference model for all cultures, is frequently accused of ethnocentrism and being the product of Western individualism. However, my contention is that B&L's MP represents a typical modernity's model of self, which is 'autonomous' 'calculative' and 'goal-oriented' as in 'rational choice theory', which, I observe, B&L adopted as part of their theoretical framework. From this point of view, criticism of the B&L model of self can go further than pointing simply to its western bias (though that may be true, too). More fundamentally, B&L's model of self is tied into their procedures for building a theory, and these procedures have a substantial pedigree in much of modern science. In other words, modernity's self is an indispensable component in a great deal of modernist theory construction, so in this way it is profoundly tied into B&L's theoretical and methodological project overall. In Chapter 3, I will go on to discuss modernist

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[76] "Weber distinguished four types of action: traditional, affectual, *Zweckrational* and *Wertrational.* Traditional actions are those performed simply because they have been performed in the past. Affectual actions are those performed simply to express emotion. *Zweckrational* (instrumental action) is action in which the actor not only compares different means to a goal, but also assesses the utility of the goal itself. In *Wertrational* (value rationality), the actor takes the goal as an end in itself and may not even compare different means to that goal." (Abercrombie et al. 2000:3)

assumptions in theory construction extensively as well as its limitations.

2.2.2. The notion of 'face' in B&L's theory

B&L's theory's other key notion is 'face'. B&L claimed that they borrowed their concept of 'face' from Goffman and the English folk term (1987:61). However, B&L's notion of 'face' deviates both from the common English meaning and from the original Oriental notion of face, particularly the Chinese and Japanese views of 'face'. Various researchers (e.g. Matsumoto 1988, Gu 1990, Mao1994, Nwoye 1992, Bharuthram 2003) have criticized B&L's notion of face as individualistic, whereas they claim that the notion of face in original Chinese thinking[77] and in these researchers' societies is much more collectivistic. Thus criticisms have focused on the individualistic traits of B&L's notion of face, but the real problem, I maintain, is that B&L created their own idiosyncratic notion of 'face', in which they mixed different definitions of 'face'. As I observe, B&L's notion of face is not simply a borrowed notion from the normal English notion or from Goffman as they claim, but a highly technical notion which they deliberately created for the sake of their theory construction and which may not necessarily be built on a general consensus of what 'face' in common English usage actually means.

In this section, I will unpack B&L's technical notion of 'face' and explore what elements are embedded in their notion and discuss how B&L's adaptation creates problems (in **2.2.2. (a).** and **(b).**). Then I will look at the generally accepted meaning of 'face' or the common English understanding of face and show how B&L's technical notion of face deviates from it (in **2.2.2.(c).**). I will also explore the original Chinese

[77] Goffman acknowledges that the original notion of face come from Chinese. OED also records its Chinese origin.

notion of face from Mao's analysis (in **2.2.2.(d).**) and the notion of 'face' from other collectivistic cultures (in **2.2.2.(e).**) and compare them with B&L's notion. (I will save the discussion on the difference between B&L's notion of face and Goffman's notion of face for Chapter 5 where I will discuss Goffman's sociology.)

(a).B&L's technical notion of 'face'

As discussed, the notion of 'face' is a key concept in B&L's theory. It is a very complex notion combining various disparate elements. In this section, I will unpack what is involved in B&L's complex notion of 'face'.

First, B&L deliberately chose to treat the aspects of 'face' as basic 'want' rather than the notion related to 'norm or values subscribed to by members of a society'.

> It would have been possible to treat the respect for face as norms or values subscribed to by members of a society (as perhaps most anthropologists would assume). Instead, we treat the aspects of face as basic wants that every member knows every other member desires, and which in general it is in the interests of every member to partially satisfy. (1987:62)

B&L (1987:62) explicitly state that this notion of 'want' comes from their commitment to the Weberian *zweckrational* (instrumental rationality) model of individual action. In this way, as I have suggested, B&L's theory has adopted 'rational choice theory', which assumes that human behaviour is guided by this 'instrumental rationality', as a theoretical framework to explain politeness (See 2.2.1 (b)., this chapter). The Model Person's choice of politeness is based on rational calculation. The MP, motivated to satisfy its own want, aims to achieve the highest pay-offs, in his/her choice of politeness strategies.

Second, B&L listed two social psychological needs and incorporated them both into the notion of 'want' and called them 'negative face' and 'positive face'. B&L claim that there are two different wants: "the want of every 'competent adult member' that his

action be unimpeded by others" (negative face) and "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (positive face). As already discussed (See 2.1.1., this chapter), these may be identified with two fundamental social psychological needs or desires that human beings have as social beings.

Third, despite their technical notion of 'face' as 'wants' consisting of negative face and positive face, B&L went on to define 'face' as 'public self-image', which is the commonly accepted meaning of 'face' rather than their technical notion. So B&L might have taken the 'public self-image' from Goffman (1967:5), who defined that face is "an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes". B&L deliberately combined two quite different notions for the purpose of their theory construction. I will discuss this double meaning of 'face' further in the next section.

(b). Double meaning of 'face' in B&L's theory

Though B&L's definition of 'face' as 'want' appears to be an idiosyncratic notion of face, B&L claimed that their notion of 'face' is derived from Goffman and the common English notion. B&L discussed this generally accepted meaning of 'face' in a separate section, in which they provided the definition of their technical notion of 'face'.

> Our notion of 'face' is derived from that of Goffman and from the English folk term, which ties up face notions of being embarrassed or humiliated, or 'losing face'. Thus face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction. In general, people cooperate (and assume each other's cooperation) in maintaining face in interaction, such cooperation being based on the mutual vulnerability of face. That is, normally everyone's face depends on everyone else's being maintained, and since people can be expected to defend their faces if threatened, it is in general in every participant's best interest to maintain each others' face… (1987:61).

It seems odd that B&L provide a technical or idiosyncratic definition of 'face as 'want' (consisting of positive face and negative face) (See 2.2.2 (a). above) in their theoretical framework, based on the instrumental rationality of human action, *zweckrational* model

(B&L 1987:62) (See 2.2.1 (b)., this chapter),. and then proceed to add an alternative definition of 'face', which represents the more commonly accepted notion of 'face'.

Why did B&L need to bring back the more commonly accepted notion of 'face' after they had created their own particular notion of 'face' as 'want'? My view is that it is because of the notion of 'face threat', which is one of the central theoretical constructs in B&L's theory. If we adopt B&L's technical definition of 'face-wants' alone as they are, B&L's theory encounters problems: the rational choice theory, from which the notion of 'want' was taken assumes an 'autonomous rational calculative self' while 'face threat' assumes the social interdependence of self, that is, individuals are susceptible to each other in interaction. Face is threatened because we are afraid of losing face, because our self-image or identity is socially dependent on other peoples' evaluation. In other words, the self model assumed in the concept of 'face threat' is the 'socially interdependent self' or social constructionist view of self. In order to make their argument of 'face-threat' work, B&L needed to recover this original notion of 'face', which assumes individual's mutual vulnerability in social interaction and to allow this double meaning of 'face' in B&L's theory.

On the one hand, B&L use a Model Person, who is essentially independent of social, cultural or moral relationships just like modernity's model of self, motivated to obtain the highest payoffs by 'self-ish' rational calculation. Based on this model, B&L explain politeness as being motivated by the individual's face-wants. On the other hand, B&L also employed the notion of 'face threats' as providing the central motivating force for social actors to use various politeness strategies. When B&L used the expression 'face threats', the original and more generally accepted meanings of 'face' such as 'dignity', 'honour' or 'reputation' had to be employed. When dignity, honour and reputations are threatened, it will cause face loss or embarrassment. Face-threat or

face-loss is expressed as the sense of being embarrassed or humiliated. This is the socially related feeling that individuals need to deal with in interaction. The notion of 'face' must inevitably involve social relationships or the interaction order that people are expected to maintain.[78] The self, then, is intertwined with social expectations. The assumption behind the notion of face threat is the socially interdependent or socially constructed self. Such usage of 'face' in face threats cannot be explained by individualistic wants or desires in modernity's self model, which is rational, calculative and autonomous and is not constituted by culture, history or its relationship with others (See 2.2.1.(b)., this chapter). Therefore B&L needed to employ this double meaning of 'face' in order to make their theory work. These two self-contradictory notions of 'face' assume entirely different views of self and thus B&L's theory involves a serious theoretical inconsistency. However, this contradiction in B&L's theory may be seen as a reflection of a frequent dilemma in sociological theory – how to comprehend social action, and whether the motivating force arises from the individual or from society. This will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

(c). Difference from the common English usage

I will now show how B&L's technical notion of 'wants' is significantly different from what we usually mean by 'face' (what B&L call "the English folk term"). The following are typical definitions of 'face' from various dictionaries.

> Value or standing in the eyes of others, prestige (American Heritage)
> Prestige; dignity (Merriam-Webster);
> The respect and honour of others (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary);
> Reputation: Personal prestige or the respect accorded to somebody by others (Encarta World English Dictionary).

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[78] 'Interaction order' is the term that Goffman employed. I will discuss this further in Chapter 5.

According to these dictionary definitions, 'face' has to do with 'honour', 'prestige', 'dignity' and 'reputation'. I maintain that 'reputation' or 'prestige' is by its very nature not something which individuals can claim or earn on his/her own in one brief instant. It cannot be built instantly in one single interaction; but has to be built up gradually over a period of time through the evaluation of others. It must be dependent on others' or society's evaluation over a period of time. However, losing reputation can probably happen in an instant if someone carries out some undesirable action or interaction. In other words, 'face' as 'reputation' or 'prestige' takes time to build but 'face' can be lost in a single incident. All the reputation that person has built up over the months or years could possibly be lost in an instant.

As discussed earlier, B&L treated 'face' as 'wants' that they claim for him/herself (1987:62) consisting of 'negative face', and 'positive face' by adopting a Weberian *zweckrational* model of individual action based on goal-oriented or instrumental rationality. However, 'prestige' 'dignity' 'honour' and 'reputation' in the above definitions of various dictionaries do not seem to have been obtained by their individual's goal-oriented calculative rationality, but rather is accorded by others and by society through long-term evaluation of the individual's conduct over a period of time. B&L's understanding of 'face' as 'want' may serve the rational actor model of Model Person, but the sense of 'face' as socially accorded value or reputation cannot be easily integrated with it. B&L's other definition of 'face' as 'public self-image' does seem to employ some of the commonly accepted meaning of 'face'. B&L's definition of 'positive face' may have some resemblance to the common English meaning of face. However, B&L's definition of 'negative face' seems to differ very considerably from the commonly accepted definitions of 'face', i.e. "honour', 'prestige', 'dignity' and 'reputation'.

(d).Difference from the original Chinese notion

Both Goffman and the Oxford English Dictionary acknowledge that the original notion of face comes from Chinese but B&L's theory failed to refer to the original Chinese notion of face at all. It is worth exploring the Chinese notion of face and comparing it with B&L's notion of face. The word 'face' is a literal translation of two Chinese words: *lien* and *mien-tsu*[79] (Ho 1976:867). "It originally appeared in the phrase 'to save one's face' in the English community in China and conveyed a meaning of 'one's credit, good name, reputation'; the phrase 'to save one's face' as a whole refers to the ways or strategies the Chinese commonly adopted in order to avoid incurring shame or disgrace" (The OED 1987 ed. in Mao 1994:454). Mao (1994:457) explains two distinct meanings.

> On the one hand, *miànzi* stands for prestige or reputation, which is either achieved through getting on in life (Hu 1944:45) or ascribed (or even imagined) by other members of one's own community (Ho 1976:869-870). On the other hand, *liǎn* refers to 'the respect of the group for a man with a good moral reputation"; it embodies "the confidence of society in the integrity of ego's moral character" and it is "both a social sanction for enforcing moral standards and an internalised sanction (Hu 1944:45).

Mao (1994:458) points out that 'to lose *liǎn*' is a far more serious act than 'to lose *miànzi*' because the former amounts to a condemnation by the community for socially distasteful or immoral behaviour or judgement (Hu 1944:45 in Mao 1994:458). To lose *miànzi*', on the other hand, is to suffer a loss of one's reputation because of a certain failure or misfortune; a person who turns poor due to misfortune or fierce competition will have lost *miànzi but not liǎn* (Ho 1975 in 871 in Mao 1994:458). Mao (1994:457) claims that it was the meaning conveyed by *miànzi* which has been incorporated into the definitions of face in contemporary English dictionaries as presented in the previous section and that the meaning of *liǎn* is not mentioned in these dictionaries nor alluded to

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[79] Mao (1994) transcribes them as *miànzi* and *liǎn*.

in standard discussion of the concept of face. However, Mao (1994:458) points out that while there are different emphases as Hu (1944) has identified, the distinction is not categorical and the two characters may be used interchangeably. But one difference which remains constant is that *liǎn* carries the moral connotation or social judgement of character which is secondary in *miànzi*.

Mao (1994:459) summarises two major differences between the Chinese 'face' and B&L's notion of 'face'. The first difference is that "B&L centre their definition upon an 'individual' – rather than the communal – aspect of face" (1994:459), whereas "Chinese face emphases not the accommodation of individual 'want' or 'desires' but the harmony of individual conduct with the views and judgment of the community" (1994:460). "Chinese face depends upon and is determined by the participations of others. To maintain one's Chinese face is, then, to perform a communal act" and Chinese face "belongs to the individual or to the self only to the extent that the individual acts in full compliance with that face" In other words, it is "not an inalienable, God-given right" (ibid.).

The second difference pertains to the content of face. B&L claim that face consists in 'positive face' and 'negative face'. The notion of *miànzi* is in Chinese is "a desire to secure public acknowledgement of one's prestige or reputation" (1994:460). When one obtains *miànzi*, one "wins a recognition not so much of one's claim to freedom of action as of one's claim to the respect or prestige of the community" (ibid). Then *miànzi* is similar to English common usage of 'face', but is very different from B&L's 'negative face', which is the individaul's want to be free from external imposition. Mao (1994:461) points that B&L's 'positive' face has some resemblance to *liǎn* because both identify an individual's desire to be liked and to be approved of by others. However, as discussed above, *liǎn* has a distinctive moral overtone, whereas

B&L's positive face does not. Mao (1994) concludes that B&L's notion of face is quite different from the notion of Chinese face both in its individualistic nature and lack of moral overtone.

It is not just the Chinese notion of 'face' which is different from B&L's notion of face. Matsumoto (1988) also points out that for Japanese "[l]oss of face is associated with the perception by others that one has not comprehended and acknowledged the structure and hierarchy of the group" (Matsumoto 1988:405).[80] The Japanese notion of 'face' places significance on communal interdependence. Thus B&L's definition of face, particularly 'negative face' as the want or desire to defend his/her own territory from the encroachment of others does not make sense in the Japanese context. Other researchers (e.g. Nwoye 1992, Bharuthram 2003, Lee-Wong 2000,) similarly point out the notion of 'face' in the culture they come from is more communal oriented and deviates from B&L's face.[81]

B&L's notion of 'face', which consists of negative and positive face may have appealed to many researchers, because they could identify with the two fundamental social psychological needs or desires, 'autonomy' and 'sociability' expressed in the notions of negative and positive politeness. However, as I discussed, B&L's notion of 'face' is a technical notion, which deviates not only from the common notion of 'face' in countries such as China, Japan and Nigeria but also from the common English usage.

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[80] Mao (1994:467) points out that the Japanese concept of facer resembles the Chinese concept of face: "both stress the public, communal aspect, and both foreground others' perceptions of whether a given relationship has been acknowledged (Japanese), or a given sanction has been secured (Chinese)."In fact, the Japanese word for 'face', *mentsu*, comes from Chinese *miànzi*.

[81] Mao (1994:471) employs a 'deep structure' to explain difference in the notion of face between individualistic and collectivistic societies. The underlying forces of B&L's face is a *centrifugal* force, as Anglo-American 'face' spirals outward from individuals' desires or wants and sees the self as the initiating agent. The collectivistic society's 'face', on the other hand, represent a *centripetal* force, as 'face' in these collectivistic societies gravitates toward social recognition and hierarchical interdependence.

3. Conclusion

Brown and Levinson moved politeness studies out of the arena of early pragmatics and saw politeness as 'universal' yet 'social' principles. B&L focused on the social actors who employ politeness and tried to explain their motivation behind politeness in social interaction. B&L hypothesised a Model Person (MP) endowed with the properties of 'rationality' and 'face' and saw politeness as strategies for minimizing Face Threatening Acts (FTA). They argued that this MP rationally calculates the seriousness of FTA through consideration of three social variables and choose the most appropriate strategies which will produce the highest payoffs.

Major criticisms of B&L's theory have been directed to the theoretical constructs, 'Model Person' and 'face'. Many researchers criticised their theory as ethnocentric and reflecting Western individualism. It is important to see beyond the ethnocentrism debate and to put B&L's theory into the wider academic context of modernity-post modernity theory construction. I argued that B&L's Model Person is a modernity's model of self, which is often known as the 'rational actor' model. B&L, based on Weber's *zweckrational* action model, explained politeness employing 'rational choice theory'. The key notions in B&L's theory such as 'rationality' 'highest payoff' 'wants' all suggest association with this theory. B&L defined 'face' with their technical notion of 'face-want' to fit into the 'rational choice theory', but when B&L employed the notion of 'face-threat' in their theory they needed to recover the more commonly accepted meaning of 'face' as 'reputation' or positive social value. Thus B&L employed a double meaning of 'face', each of which assumes different models of self, the former assuming a 'rational autonomous self' and the latter assuming a 'social interdependent self'. Consequently B&L's theory contains theoretical inconsistencies.

B&L theorised politeness as the product of an individual's strategies arising out of rational calculation. There may be societal or social constraints which influence individual's action, but in B&L's theory, which focuses on the 'individual', such social elements are downplayed merely as variables for calculation of W*x*. This way, the Model Person remains as a rational autonomous actor, who freely chooses various strategies based on rational calculation. Theories like B&L's theory, which focus on the 'individual', cannot explain the social structure adequately. This common difficulty of failing to encapsulate both 'individual' and 'society' together is the classic problem of modern sociology known as the 'structure' and 'agency' dilemma. In the next chapter, I will highlight the limitations of theoretical assumptions in relation to these three politeness theories discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

Chapter 3 Politeness and modern social theories

0. Introduction

In this chapter, I will re-examine the theoretical assumptions behind these politeness theories and elevate the discussion to the sociological and philosophical level. It is my contention that these major politeness theories were all based upon *modernist* academic assumptions. **Section 1** explores some underlying assumptions of the three politeness theories. **1.1.** shows the modernist assumptions behind politeness theories and **1.2.** examines the theoretical bases of the three politeness theories (in **1.2.1.**, those of Lakoff and Leech' and in **1.2.2.**, those of Brown and Levinson). **Section 2** shows how they reflect two different approaches in social theory. **Section 3** highlights the modernist assumptions which influenced their theory construction and its limitations and sets the stage for **Part II** of this thesis: **"Politeness beyond Modernity"**.

1. Some underlying assumptions behind the three politeness theories

1.1. Modernism behind politeness theories

Politeness, which had been long discussed as an issue of social etiquette or manners, has gained renewed interest as a subject for scientific investigation since the 1970s. Just as formal linguists are concerned with the status of linguistics as a proper science, researchers of politeness have also been concerned with establishing an acceptable theory as a modern academic discipline.

Modernism in academia may be traced back to two main sources. The first is

Descartes's attempt to provide a new foundation for philosophy in his famous declaration 'cogito ergo sum' ('I think, therefore I am'), which has been conceived as the absolute, indubitable ground of knowledge since the seventeenth century (Norris 2000:26). The second is Isaac Newton, who provided the scientific framework for modernity by seeing the physical world as a mechanistic world of laws and regularity discernable by the human mind (Grenz 1996:3). Descartes and Newton directly influenced the eighteenth century philosophical movement, the Enlightenment, in which the traditional spiritual and religious authority of the state, and especially of the church was undermined and 'reason', 'rationality' and 'science' came to be seen as the basis of human progress and advancement (Graham, Doherty and Malek 1992:8).

The fundamental philosophical notions introduced in this period, later known as Cartesianism, have become the hallmark of 'modernism' throughout its succeeding phases, namely "a belief in the essential order of things; that under the seeming surface of the world, of society, there exists a rationality, a basic truth that can be identified and harnessed for human good" (Graham, Doherty and Malek 1992:8). In modernism, we are always anxious that we ought to search for the "Archimedean point upon which we can ground our knowledge" (Bernstein 1983:16), because we believe that only on such solid ground of rationality and scientific method, can we have a firm and unchanging knowledge of ourselves and the world around us. Bernstein named this "Cartesian Anxiety" (1983:16, 18, 29) and claimed that such anxiety has always been hovering in the background of modernism.[82]

82 The origin of this anxiety is found in Descartes's *Meditations on the First Philosophy*. In the first *Meditation*, Descartes writes: "It is now some years since I detected how many were the false beliefs that I had from my earliest youth admitted as true, and how doubtful was everything I had since constructed on this basis, and from that time, I was convinced that I must once for all seriously undertake to rid myself of all the opinions which I had formerly accepted, and commence to build anew from the foundation, if I wanted to establish any firm and permanent structure in the sciences" (Descartes 1967:144). In the second *Meditation*, he writes: "Archimedes, in order that he might draw the terrestrial globe out of its place, and transport it elsewhere, demanded only that one point should be fixed and immovable, in the same way I shall have the right to conceive high hopes if I am happy enough to discover one thing only which is certain and indubitable" (Descartes 1967:149).

The main features of Cartesianism are familiar to us because we have almost unconsciously accepted them as the foundation of our *modernist* thinking. Bernstein (1983:115-7) summarises them in seven points [83]

> First, Descartes introduces a rigorous distinction between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*.[84] This distinction is the basis for the sharp separation of two types of quasi substance, mind and body....
>
> Second, if one is to achieve clear and distinct knowledge, the I, the subject must engage in the activity of intellectual self-purification. By the procedure of methodological doubt, I must bracket or suspend judgment in everything that can be doubted in order to discover the Archimedian point that can serve as a proper foundation for the sciences. I must suspend judgement in all my former opinions and prejudices. This is essentially a solitary, monological activity (although it is likened to an internal dialogue), in the sense that I, in the solitude of my study, can by self-reflection discover the groundlessness of former opinions and prejudices. Descartes never really doubts that one can achieve this self-transparency and self-understanding by proper meditative reflection.
>
> Third, Descartes understands human finitude in a distinctive way. For although we are finite, we are not imperfect....It is by virtue of this 'ample' and 'unconstrained' free will that I have the capacity to assert or to deny – that is, to *judge*. There is no intrinsic defect or imperfection in my will or my understanding....
>
> Fourth, truth is primarily ascribed to judgement. Judging is an activity of the will, it is always within my power (at least when meditating) to withhold my judgment....It is I who am responsible for making false judgements. Because of the exigencies of action and the infirmity of my nature I cannot hope to altogether avoid making errors....
>
> Fifth, once we discover the Archimedean point that can serve as a foundation, then we can build a solid edifice of knowledge by following strict rules and Method. These rules can be specified, and they serve two closely related functions. They enable use to extend our knowledge systematically and they ensure that nothing will be admitted as knowledge (and consequently as true) unless it satisfies the rigorous requirements of the specified rules.
>
> Sixth, when *justifying* claims to knowledge, there should be no appeal other than the appeal to reason itself. We must be sceptical about my claims to knowledge that are based solely on the testimony of the senses, former opinions, prejudices, traditions or any authority other than reason. There may be many sources for our coming to know something, but the court of appeal to validate claims to knowledge is reason – a reason which is universal, not limited by historical contingencies, and shared by all rational beings.

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[83] Some may be attributed to the interpretation of Descartes's work by later thinkers rather than his own original work but nevertheless it became part of Cartesianism.

[84] *Res cogitans* is 'the thinking being', i.e. 'subject' and *res extensa* is 'the physical world' or 'world'. Here Descartes takes a subjectivist point of view : it is the subject that determines the world around him, and not the other way around.

Seventh, one of the important consequences of Cartesianism was to forge a close link between experience and the senses and to focus almost exclusive attention on the *epistemological* role of experience. Of course, it was not due solely to Descartes that the senses have been thought of as the primary source of experience. This is also fundamental to the empiricist tradition. But despite major differences between rationalists and empiricists in their understanding of the senses and their contribution to knowledge, both traditions are dominated by an epistemological interest in the senses and experience.

Given these seven points, it should be clear why Descartes is so suspicious of any claim to knowledge that is based upon appeals to authority, tradition and opinions. We even find here the seeds for the typical Enlightenment contrasts between reason and tradition, reason and authority, reason and superstition.

Cartesianism provided the foundation of modernism, that is, the conviction that knowledge is not only certain (hence 'rational') but also 'objective' and that the modern 'knower' is able to view the world as an unconditioned observer – that is, to survey the world from a vantage point outside the flux of history (Grenz 1996:4). Modernist thinkers are also confident that they can devise a 'method' of investigation that facilitates the discovery of those truths that were absolutely certain. The fundamental assumption that human beings can achieve objective understanding of the world is rooted in Descartes's essential distinction between *res cogitans,* 'thinking being' and *res extensa,* 'the physical world'.

Over time not only natural sciences but all academic disciplines tried to establish themselves on this Cartesian foundation, largely characterised by rationalism, scientism, empiricism and positivism. Positivism, a favoured methodology of modernism, developed by August Comte (1798-1857), sought to develop universal laws, whereby actual or real events in the world are explained in a deductive fashion by universal laws that assert definite and unproblematic relationships. Comte argued that the scientific, 'positive' method based on observation, comparison, experimental and quantitative methods should be extended to the study of politics and society and he became the founder of 'sociology'. Positive sociology treated social facts as hard,

objective reality. Jones (2003:35) summarises the guiding principle of positivist science as "if something exists in nature, it has been caused by something else in nature". Wainwright (2000:2) points out three key points of positivism. "First, positivists limit scientific ontology to the observable....Second, positivists operationalise theory: rules link theory with observation. Third, positivists equate regularities and predictions with causations and explanation."

These modernist frameworks take different forms but they all share the key elements that makes them 'modern'. Grenz (1996:40) describes the modern worldview as follows: "Foundational to the modern outlook is the assumption of an objective world around us. The modern worldview assumes that reality is ordered and that human reason is capable of discerning this order as it is manifested in the laws of nature." Graham, Doherty and Malak (1992:10) suggest that modernism is characterized by "a commitment to the search for the underlying order in society; an implicit acceptance of the desirability of identifying a 'master' narrative, a totalising discourse which will embrace a universalistic understanding of society".

With underlying modernist academic assumptions always in the background, the mainstream of politeness studies has been directed towards the construction of a universal theory or framework for understanding politeness. As I have already argued, researchers of politeness have avoided accepting commonsense notions of politeness, a range of culture-specific 'social norms', i.e. 'first-order politeness' (politeness1) and instead endeavoured to produce a scientific conceptualisation of politeness, i.e. 'second-order politeness' (politeness2)[85]. More specifically I have shown how Lakoff (1973, 1975), and Leech (1983), in systematising politeness as pragmatic rules/principles, and Brown & Levinson (1978, 1987) in establishing politeness as universal and social principles, endeavoured to make their theories credible as modern

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[85] This distinction was first proposed in Watts et al. 1992:3-4.

academic theories. The 'autonomous' 'self-determining' model of self portrayed in the Model Person in B&L's theory reflects the Enlightenment view of man current at that time. Much Post-B&L empirical research also exemplifies the same quasi-scientific approach, which has been favoured in modern academic disciplines. The next subsections (1.2) elucidate the theoretical bases of these three major politeness theories.

1.2 The Theoretical bases of three politeness theories

1.2.1. Lakoff and Leech – a Structure-centred approach

Lakoff and Leech's theories, which saw politeness as pragmatic principles/rules (Lakoff's Rule of Politeness; Leech's Politeness Principle) had their roots in Saussurean structuralism which made the 'idealised language' *(langue*) the object of study. It focused on the orderly aspect of language, *structure* or language system neatly divided into sub-disciplines such as morphology, syntax, phonology or semantics. Lakoff (1973, 1975) and Leech (1983) viewed politeness as a set of pragmatic rules or principles of language. I will call Lakoff's and Leech's approach to politeness a **structure-centred approach** to politeness, because both are largely influenced by structuralism which focuses on the structure or the language system in their theoretical framework.

Saussurean structuralism, primarily significant in linguistics, was later applied to sociology and anthropology (e.g. Lévi-Strauss). "In sociology 'structural' refers to a relatively stable point of reference of any system under consideration" (Williams 1992:227). Structuralism is often classified together with Functionalism, because both focus upon structure and system (See Fig 3.2 in 3.(a)., this chapter).[86] Functionalism in anthropology (e.g. Malinowski, Radcliff-Brown)[87] also focuses on a stable social

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[86] Barnard (2000:120) points out similarities between structuralism and functionalism: both are concerned with relations between things but the difference is that structuralists are generally interested in structures of society itself whereas functionalists aim to find order within social relations.

[87] Some of Radcliffe-Brown's followers did not object to the term 'functionalism' but others took to the labels 'structural-functionalist' or 'structuralist' to distinguish their work from Malinowski. Furthermore,

system within society. "For anthropologists and sociologists, the point of functionalist investigation was to identify the standardized habits that maintained the social organism in a condition of dynamic equilibrium – the 'more or less stable social structures' regulating individual's relations to one another..." (Kuklick 2002: 247). In functionalism, "social actions are not to be explained by the immediate meaning they have for individual actors, but they are to be explained by the functions they serve for wider social groups" (Holmwood 2005:88). Elements of both structuralism and functionalism (or structural-functionalism) can be traced back to the work of Emile Durkheim.[88]

1.2.2. B&L's theory – An Agency-centred approach

(a). Action Theory

Brown & Levinson made some deliberate decisions for the sake of theory construction. Whereas Lakoff and Leech focused on politeness as rules of language use, B&L focused on individual acts of politeness in dyadic act-by-act interaction.[89] B&L developed the notion of a Model Person (MP) endowed with two special properties 'rationality' and 'face' for purpose of their theory construction and defined 'politeness' as being a speaker's strategic acts aimed at minimizing potential face-threats. As discussed, the MP represents modernity's model of self, which rationally calculates the highest payoffs to satisfy its face-wants. B&L argued that based upon such calculation, the MP chooses to use 'positive', 'negative' politeness or 'off-record' strategies when performing face-threatening acts (FTA)

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the term 'British structuralist' was used in the 1950s to distinguish the Radcliff-Brown school from the French structuralism of Lévi-Strauss.

[88] Durkheim argues that the existence of phenomena or the production of actions is not to be explained by its direct efficient causes, but rather by its indirect *effects* in relation to an environment or its *functions*. (Holmwood 2005:89)

[89] B&L (1987:243) claim that "the theory was couched in terms of individual acts, and presented a dyadic act-by-act account of strategic interaction".

In contrast to Lakoff and Leech's structure-centred approach, I will call B&L's theory an **agency-centred approach** to politeness because it focuses upon the social actors (agency) in terms of the Model Person. In modern sociological theorisation, such an approach is called an **action theory**. The term action theory "covers a variety of theoretical schools[90], which tend to focus on the individual – the human actor – as their key unit of analysis" (Kaspersen 2000:21). In action theory, human beings are considered to be "unique in that they act on the basis of subjective motives, values and intentions" (ibid. 22) and understanding human beings is the key to understanding society. Jones (2003:17-18) points out that action theory stresses the need to concentrate on the micro-levels of social life, the way particular individuals interact with one another in individual social encounters, rather than on the macro-level, the way the whole structure of society influences the behaviour of individuals. Action theorists often recognise that human action is voluntary and assume that it is a product of a conscious decision to act. What we actually do is the result of choosing to act in one way rather than another. Thus many action theories emphasise the intentionality of human action.

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[90] Ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism (SI) and rational choice theory are different examples of action theories. **Ethnomethodology** is interested in the mutually shared social order, which is believed to be constantly being produced in our actions, including in our conversation with each other. The social order is created via our actions, where we apply a range of methods, procedures and practices. Garfinkel maintains that consciously or unconsciously, we are continually applying ethnomethodology, which is the method people apply in informal contexts. By studying conversations, they try to understand the social order. (Kaspersen 2000:22-23) **Symbolic interactionism** argues that social life is literally the 'interaction of humans via the use of symbols'. Jones (2003:103) points out that SI theorists are interested in "the way in which humans employ symbols of what they mean in order to communicate with one another" and "the effect that the interpretations of these symbols have on the behaviour of parties during social interaction".

(b).Characteristics of rational choice theory

Many action theorists look for the motivations behind actions. For such explanations, B&L chose a 'rational choice theory', based upon Weber's *zweckrational* model of individual action. (See *Ch.2* 2.1.(b)). In this subsection, I will examine and evaluate the 'rational choice theory' that B&L adopted.

Scott (2000:126-131) summarises the basic tenets of 'rational choice theory'. First, it adopts a *methodological individualism*, i.e. that "complex social phenomena can be explained in terms of the elementary individual actions of which they are composed" (Scott 2000:127). Proponents of methodological individualism assert that "individuals are the only kind of reality with the necessary and sufficient causal power capable of generating social phenomena" (Parker 2003:13). A 'rational choice theory' attempts to explain all social phenomena in terms of rational calculations of self-interested individuals (Scott 2000:136).

> In rational choice theories, individuals are seen as motivated by the wants or goals that express their 'preferences'. They act within specific, given constraints and on the basis of the information that they have about the conditions under which they are acting. At its simplest, the relationship between preferences and constraints can be seen in the purely *technical* terms of the relationship of a means to an end. As it is not possible for individuals to achieve all of the various things that they want, they must also make choices in relation to both their goals and the means for attaining these goals. Rational choice theories hold that individuals must anticipate the outcomes of alternative courses of action and calculate that which will be best for them. Rational individuals choose the alternative that is likely to give them the greatest satisfaction. (Scott 2000:127-128)

Second, some rational choice theories such as George Homans's pioneering version (1961) were inspired by 'conditioning' as in Skinner's behaviourism, which assumes that human behaviour is motivated by the rewards and punishments that are encountered. Human motivations are more complex than those of animals who may do anything for food; humans may seek rewards such as approval, recognition, love or money, but Homans argues that the basic mechanism is the same (Scott 2000:128). In

behaviourism it is assumed that human behaviour can be studied in purely external and objective terms, ignoring human internal mental states. Other rational choice theorists did not even discuss psychological bases, but simply assume it as a starting point that humans act as if they were fully rational. Overall, rational choice theories do not dig very deeply into individual psychology (Scott 2000:129).

Third, following the economic model, rational choice theory sees social interaction as 'social exchange'. "Economic action involves an exchange of goods and services; social interaction involves the exchange of approval and certain other valued behaviours" (Scott 2000:129). In other words, social interaction is "motivated by the pursuit of 'profitable' balance of *rewards* over *costs* [emphasis added]" (ibid.).

Barnes (1990:34-35) points out two fundamental problems inherent in *methodological individualism*, which B&L's theory also inherited. The first is its inability to explain the existence of collective action. Individualism, in its tenets, denies 'collectives' as autonomous decision-makers. The fundamental reason for the first problem is then not that rational actors are self-regarding but rather that they operate *independently* (ibid.29). Barnes writes a scenario for individualism.

> In a nutshell, individualism assumes that an agent in a social situation will operate as follows: she will independently take stock of the situation; rationally calculate in the light of what she knows how each available action is liable to affect the situation; note which action is likely to be the most effective in furthering her goal; and enact that action accordingly. Where the individual is egoistic, goals will be self-serving and actions will be self-interested. Such a hypothetical individual, because it is commonly postulated in economic theories of human behaviour, is sometimes referred to as manifesting "economic rationality". (1995:13)

Genuine collective actions by rational actors or economically rational (ER) individuals[91] are theoretically impossible (Barnes 1995:29). In the framework of individualism,

[91] ER is another name for the 'rational' 'autonomous' 'calculative' self. The social actor in 'rational choice theory' is termed in various ways such as 'rational actor', 'homo economicus' or 'economical rationality' (ER) individual.

collective action or action resulting in the collective good is induced only by coercion, the prospect of private loss or gain, or analysed in terms of rational, utility maximizing individuals. Applying Barnes' point to B&L's theory, with methodological individualism it is difficult to explain why ER individuals, who independently calculate their own benefit, should be interested in satisfying the 'face want' of others. B&L appear to have resolved the problem of 'methodological individualism' by bringing in the notion of 'face threat', but as I argued earlier (See *Ch.2* 2.2.2.(b)), they did not do it successfully because the notion of 'face threat' assumes a model of selves who are socially interdependent or socially vulnerable to one another, which is contradictory to the expected behaviour of the ER individual.

The second problem of *methodological individualism* is the problem of knowledge (Barnes 1995:34-35). In order to act as an ER individual, he or she has to be knowledgeable, but such knowledge cannot be taken as *given*. Consider a new member who has just arrived in the world with little cognitive ability and who is about to acquire language, knowledge and culture from scratch. Rationality requires mastery of a repertoire of symbols and references to a body of knowledge, neither of which new members possess. Fundamental difficulties arise if such a new member is treated as an ER individual. Newly arrived members in any society are inevitably incompetent members. They cannot be rational in quite the same way that existing members have become. There is an awkward problem of whether to act on the basis of what is already known or to learn more about the situation from experience first. How far is *learning* a rational action? The activities of new members and in particular learning activities, pose a challenge to any social theory based on *methodological individualism*. Brown and Levinson portray their Model Person as "all competent adult members of a society" (1987:67). This suggests that B&L are aware of this intractable problem. By using the words 'competent' and 'adult', they seem to be trying to avoid this problem and assume they are only dealing with 'fully rational' and

'knowledgeable' individuals. B&L's theory is theoretically incapable of explaining the learning process of rationality necessary for politeness, because rational choice theory, which they adopted, is built upon *methodological individualism* and therefore inherits all the epistemological problems, which go with this social theory.

2. Two approaches in modern social theory

(a). Structure/agency dualism in modern sociology

In 1.2. in this chapter, from their theoretical bases, I classified Lakoff and Leech's approach as a 'structure-centred approach', based on structuralism and Brown & Levinson's approach as an 'agency-centred approach', based on action theory. Each theoretical framework represents reality from one perspective, but not from the other. It is a form of the classic dualism problem, namely the **structure/agency dualism** of modern sociology and anthropology. Kaspersen (2003:31) draws a helpful diagram.

Functionalism/Structuralism:

Structure/system
↓
Actor

} The social structure/system determines the actor's behaviour and possibilities for action.

Sociology's primary object of inquiry: the social structure/system

Action theory:

Actor
↓
Structure

} The social structure is composed of the sum of many individuals' actions.

Sociology's primary object of inquiry: the individual

Fig.3.1. The actor-structure relationship in traditional sociological theory (Kasperson 2000:31)

Jones (2003:141) points out that the aim of structuralism is "to bring about the '*death of the subject*'" or "to '*de-centre*' the subject." Structuralism discards the "conception

of actor/agent/member/subject as the source of meaning and the architect of a consciously created social reality" (ibid. 142). In Saussurean structuralism, for instance, a system of language (*langue*) exists independently of its users as an 'idealised system' while the role of 'agency' (actor) tends to be disregarded. Having adopted a structure-centred approach, Lakoff (1973, 1975) and Leech (1983) were unable to accommodate 'agency' (language users) effectively into their politeness theories (See *Ch.1* 4.). In the next two sections I discuss difficulties in the structure-centred approach and in the agency-centred approach and from there the weaknesses of Lakoff's and Leech's theories and of B&L's theory.

(b).Difficulties in the structure-centred approach

Manifest difficulties have been observed in the structure-centred approach to sociology, which also appear in Lakoff and Leech's approach to politeness. First, human beings tend to be viewed as mere puppets controlled by their social system without any independent will of their own. Besides Lakoff and Leech's approach, the traditional social norm approach to politeness may also be regarded as a structure-centred approach. When politeness is viewed as controlled by pragmatic rules/ principles or as social norms, human actors have little choice but to follow these pragmatic rules or societal prescribed norms. Lakoff, who initially saw politeness as 'rules', later oscillated between 'rules' and 'strategies' in defining politeness. This oscillation might suggest she was attempting to accommodate the actor's (agency's) perspective into her theory, recognising the limitations of a structure-centred approach (See *Ch.1* 1.2.3.(a).). Leech did recognise various social psychological elements involved in politeness, but he could only incorporate them within his taxonomy of maxims: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy (See *Ch.1* 2.1.(d).). Both Lakoff and Leech focused on politeness as rules/principle within language rather than considering

the language users. The 'subject' (agency) was inevitably displaced in Lakoff and Leech's theories because of their structure-centred approach.

Second, as the structure-centred approach to politeness emphasizes the importance of structure or system, there is a tendency to generalise politeness in terms of a particular society (e.g. Greek politeness, Chinese politeness) or community (e.g. Middle class politeness, Working class politeness). For instance, Lakoff (1973:303) claims that the rules of politeness are universal, but the same three universal rules, have different orders of precedence in different cultures or 'politeness systems'. In such an approach, there is a danger of taking an essentialist view of culture or community (See *Ch.1* 1.1.(c).).

Third, researchers, who take a structure-centred approach, investigate the structure (or the politeness system within a particular culture) as something fixed and *stable* which maintains society. This makes it difficult to explain the inevitable modifications to culture or changes in politeness systems that take place over the course of time.

Thus in the structure-centred approach, politeness is viewed as rules/principles of language system or structure. The major assumption is that there are generalisable principles which can be established. As the focus is upon the structure or system, language users tend to be neglected in this kind of approach.

(c). Difficulties in the agency-centred approach

On the other hand, the agency-centred approach, which sees actor/agent/subject as the source of meaning and the architect of social reality, has the difficulty of accounting for the connection between action theory and the significance of structure. The actors in action theory are assumed to be able to choose to act according to their own wills. But not all aspects of politeness involve an actor's conscious intention or

strategies. When a Japanese sociolinguist, Ide (1988; 1989; 1992) criticised B&L's theory because it focused on *volitional* strategies of politeness and failed to acknowledge the aspect of *wakimae* (discernment), she may not have realised that this is an inevitable weakness of an agency-centred approach. Ide (1989) argued that the use of the honorific verb form in Japanese is the socio-pragmatic equivalent of grammatical concord, operating just as automatically as grammatical concord, independent of the speaker's rational intention (1989:242) (See *Ch.2* 2.2.1.(a)). Having adopted an agency-centred approach, B&L classified such uses of honorific forms as a 'Giving deference' strategy, one of the negative politeness strategies. Similarly the use of 'sir' by a lower status person, the choice of second person pronouns and address terms is treated as no more than a realisation of 'Give deference' in B&L's theory. Ide (ibid.) argued that this type of politeness is behaviour based on *wakimae* (discernment), that is discerning his/her own relative position within society (or structure) and acting appropriately. I maintain that B&L's theory focused on *volitional* strategies, and failed to acknowledge the whole aspect of *wakimae*, because of its agency-centred approach. In such an approach, the aspects of politeness, which involve *wakimae*, reflecting a particular social structure is difficult to explain.

Another evidence of the difficulty of accommodating 'structure' in B&L's agency-centred approach to politeness is its treatment of social variables. The Model Person (MP) endowed with rationality and face-wants calculates the highest payoffs and chooses strategies for minimizing face-threats between the Speaker (S) and Hearer (H). The social variables that B&L suggest are Social Distance between Speaker and Hearer (D), the relative Power of Hearer and Speaker (P) and the Absolute ranking of imposition in the particular culture (R). It is assumed that the MP, which is modelled after an autonomous rational calculative self, is able to take those social variables into consideration and make free choice of implementing appropriate politeness strategies by

rational calculation. In B&L's agency-centred approach, those social variables which come from social structure are downplayed as social variables for computing W*x*, the numeral value that measures FTA. In reality, however, no social actor anywhere is ever completely autonomous, but is always caught up in various social relationships, which are often asymmetrical. (See *Ch.2* 2.1.2.) Furthermore, not all politeness behaviours are strategically implemented by rational calculation; some of what we do as polite behaviour is something we do pre-reflectively after we have been habituated to do so through the socialisation process. I will discuss this further in Chapter 4.

I have tried to show above that the problems inherent in the structure-centred and agency-centred approaches to politeness are a reflection of the classical dilemma between 'structure and agency' in sociology. I argue therefore that we need a new framework, which overcomes this structure/agency dichotomy and encompasses both aspects of politeness, encapsulating together both a 'structure-centred' approach and an 'agency-centred' approach.

3. Modernist theory construction and its limitations

(a). Various dualisms in modernist theory construction[92]

We have observed that modernist theory construction is based on the Enlightenment assumption that there is a foundational order within the whole universe and its optimistic confidence that autonomous human reason can obtain dispassionate knowledge of such an order. This modern academic project is characterised by rationalism, scientism, positivism, and universalism (See 1.1., this chapter). The direct result of modern academic projects is various dualisms.

First, there is the ***objectivism/subjectivism*** dualism. Descartes stressed a thinking rational *subject* and every other thing in the world is seen as the *object* of the

[92] I call theory construction based on *modernist* principles 'modernist theory construction' in this thesis.

self's knowledge. The result of the Cartesian view was a subject/object dualism in modernism. What is known as *objectivism and subjectivism* dualism at the philosophical level becomes a ***structure and agency*** dualism at the sociological level.[93] (See the diagram below.)

The philosophical level

Dualism:	**Objectivism**	**Subjectivism**

The sociological level

Dualism:	Structure/System	Agency/Social actor
Sociological Orientation	**Structuralism/ Functionalism**	**Action theory**

Fig.3.2. The dualism problem in philosophy and sociology (adapted from Kaspersen 2000:27)

Objectivism focuses on the *object* (in this case, society) and sees action as a direct, unmediated response to external factors such as the micro-structure of interaction or macro-level cultural, social or economic factors. ***Subjectivism*** focuses on the *subject* (in this case, the social actors) and tends to conceptualise action as a simple outgrowth from internal factors such as conscious intentions and calculation of the *subject* (social actors). (Swartz 1997:8).

Second, there is ***mind/body*** dualism. Descartes identified the *mind* with consciousness and self-awareness, i.e. the seat of intelligence. Descartes is known to have formulated the *mind/body* problem in the form in which it still exists today.[94] The

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[93] Historically, some major sociological theorists, such as Durkheim, have emphasized social structure as shaping the actions of individuals in society, while other theorists such as Weber stressed the role of voluntary action by individuals as having the capability to change structures. The former stresses 'structure' and the latter stresses 'agency'.

[94] The typical image people have about mind/body dualism is that the mind is moving the body like a puppet, giving directions to the muscles as the puppet master pulls the strings (Calhoun 2000: 706). Crossley (2001:22) unpacks this mind/body dualism revealing that the popular view is that mind is in effect identified with the brain. Many people take this view as a relatively safe option for answering philosophical questions. Crossley (2001) points out that "we tend to assume, following Descartes, that there is a single space, place or thing called 'the mind' which executes all of our mental processes and/or otherwise contains them" (ibid. 25) because "the brain is the main 'thing like' structure that we know of

resultant assumption is that the mind controls the body like a puppet, giving directions to the body. Rational, calculative mind is at the centre of the Model Person's decision making in B&L's theory.

Third, ***theory/practice*** dualism emerged as the result of the assumption that there is a universal theory and that practice is the application of theory, a form of rule-following. Saussurean *langue/parole* and Chomskyan *competence/performance* are good examples of such dichotomy.

These dualisms have been at the roots of the modernist theory constructions, which Lakoff, Leech and B&L inevitably inherited. In exploring a new alternative approach to politeness, unconstrained by modernist thinking, it is necessary to overcome these problematic theoretical dualisms.

(b). Doubts about the modernist project and the emergence of postmodernism

Our three major politeness theorists, like other modernist researchers, suffering from Cartesian Anxiety, were committed to scientific conceptualizations of politeness and thus endeavoured to establish a universal theory. Consequently they inherited modernist theory construction. Theorists generally have oscillated between 'structure' and 'agency' in attempts to capture the nature of politeness. The assumptions behind modernism, which have in the past been requirements for many modern academic enterprises, are now increasingly brought into question. Politeness theories have exhibited signs of a similar deadlock to those in modern social science. Recently many modern academic enterprises are being reexamined and alternative approaches termed "postmodern" are suggested. In the same way, it is necessary to deconstruct the problematic assumptions of modern theory construction in current politeness theories and explore an alternative approach to politeness in this postmodern or late-modern academic climate.

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which could fit the bill" (ibid.). "The brain-identity theory and the neuroscience and folk psychology depend upon one another in order to make claims about 'mental matters'" (Crossley 2001:26).

Postmodernism challenges modernist optimism in its search for universal truth and rationality and questions the progress inherent in modernism. The most widely known presentation of philosophical postmodernism is the position set out by Jean-Francois Lyotard in his book *The Postmodern Condition* (1984). Lyotard points out that once upon a time, it was possible to believe that Enlightenment thinking is the grand-narrative or 'metanarrative'[95]. Lyotard argues that we can no longer believe in the Enlightenment grand-narrative stating that "scientific knowledge does not represent the totality of knowledge; it has always existed in addition to, and in competition and conflict with, another kind of knowledge" (Lyotard 1984:7). In the *postmodern* climate, different narratives exist and these narratives are strictly incommensurable. He explains this by employing Wittgenstein's 'language games'.

> Wittgenstein, taking up the study of language again from scratch, focuses his attention on the effects of different modes of discourse; he calls the various types of utterances he identifies along the way…language games. (Lyotard 1984:10)

Lyotard claims that like all human discourse, scientific rationality is a form of human linguistic activity (language game). Though it once legitimized modern society and modern academia, it is now losing its power. There are many language games and it is impossible to presume to judge between them on grounds of justice and truth (Norris 2000:29), because according to postmodernism's new understanding, scientific knowledge is not a compilation of objective truths but a collection of research traditions born by particular communities of inquirers (Grenz 2000:56). In other words, it is a language game that is played in the scientific community and legitimized within that community.

Terkourafi (2005:238) points out that the work of Eelen (2001), Mills (2003)

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[95] A metanarrative is "a story that wants to be more than just a story, that is to say, one which claims to have achieved an omniscient standpoint above and beyond all the other stories that people have told so far" (Norris 2000:28).

and Watts (2003) reflect a 'postmodern' view of politeness, because these three theorists are no longer aiming at establishing a universal theory of politeness but instead emphasize heterogeneity in judgements about politeness and consider the role of the addressee as being of paramount importance. I agree with Terkourafi's assessment that these theorists have initiated this *postmodern* turn in politeness studies. Unlike modern politeness theorists, who endeavoured to establish a universal theory, these researchers consider politeness phenomena in particular situational or social contexts as an important object of study.[96] Eelen recovers our focus on 'first-order' politeness. Mills uses the notion of 'communities of practice' to claim a local understanding of politeness. Watts uses the term 'discursive' politeness to refer to situated politeness. Watts (2005) in "Linguistic politeness research: quo vadis?" acknowledges that the field is moving in a postmodern direction, although Eelen (2001) and Mills (2003) did not discuss their views explicitly in the modern/postmodern context. In my view, however, none of these researchers have dug sufficiently deeply into the modern/postmodern epistemological problems in the field of politeness. It is in this area, that I hope to make some contribution.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have re-examined the theoretical assumptions behind Lakoff, Leech and B&L's theories at the sociological and philosophical level. These researchers endeavoured to reach a scientific conceptualization of politeness and the construction of a universal theory of politeness to meet the demand of the modernist academic framework and thus inherited different dualisms in modernist theories. Yet these

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[96] It may not be a coincidence that the theme of the Third International Symposium on Politeness between 2-4 July 2007 was "Situated Politeness". In politeness studies, some seem to be shifting from a modernist grand-narrative approach to politeness to a postmodern approach focusing on small situated narratives.

modernist assumptions in social science have been increasingly brought into question in recent years. It is time to focus attention on new postmodern politeness studies.. These politeness theorists have oscillated between structure-centred and agency-centred approaches in attempting to elucidate politeness: and thus I labeled Lakoff and Leech's theory a 'structure-centred approach' and B&L's an 'agency-centred approach'. It is therefore necessary to find a more embracing alternative framework which can encapsulate both structure and agency. This is where I begin the second half of the thesis "Politeness beyond modernity".

Part II

Politeness beyond Modernity

The second half of the thesis (Part II) will explore alternative ways of explaining linguistic politeness, employing three new theorists as 'thinking tools' for this task of discovering alternative ways of looking at politeness in the *postmodern* academic climate. In **Chapter 4**, I will turn to Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist, who attempted to transcend this dilemma of structure and agency. In **Chapter 5**, I will borrow insights into everyday social interaction from Erving Goffman, a Canadian sociologist. In the **Conclusion**, I will bring together insights from the critical discussion of Bourdieu and Goffman and sketch out an alternative framework for politeness. The *postmodern* reconstruction of politeness studies involves questioning the scope of science after modernism has been delimited within the narrow scope of scientific rationality. Hans-Georg Gadamer, a German philosopher, the third theorist, provides the possibility of a more flexible social science which recovers "phronesis" (i.e. practical wisdom) originally expounded in Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics. Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics guides us into the path of reconstructing *postmodern* politeness.

Chapter 4 Bourdieu's sociology: Overcoming the 'structure'/'agency' dilemma

0. Introduction

I have argued so far that all three politeness theories under discussion became enmeshed in the structure/agency dualism problem and that they are all products of *modernist* academic enterprise. Coincident with the emergence of alternative *postmodern* thinking and *postmodern* theoretical approaches, there have been new directions in politeness studies, initiated by Eelen (2001), Mills (2003) and Watts (2003). Their aim is no longer a scientific conceptualization of politeness (second-order politeness) or formulation of a universal theory. Having recognised that evaluation of what is polite is disputable, their focus now is on participants' own evaluation of politeness (first-order politeness).

In this chapter, I turn to a French sociologist, **Pierre Bourdieu**. **Section 1** explains why I turned to Bourdieu for an alternative approach to politeness and how his main concerns relate to the same problems we have faced in modern politeness theories. **Section 2** introduces Bourdieu's sociology. **Section 3** shows how linguistic politeness may be understood in Bourdieu's framework. **Section 4** summarises what Bourdieu could provide as alternative approaches to politeness. **Section 5** investigates how *postmodern* politeness theorists, Eelen (2001), Watts (2003) and Mills (2003) appropriated Bourdieu in their theorisation. **Section 6** discusses the weaknesses of Bourdieu's theory of practice in relation to politeness studies. **Section 7** concludes the discussion of this chapter.

1. Bourdieu's main concern and various problems in modern politeness theories

1.1. Why Bourdieu?

Why turn to Bourdieu when exploring alternative approaches to politeness? In chapter 3, I discussed various problematic dualisms – the structure/agency dilemma, theory/practice and mind/body – inherent in modern theory construction. Lakoff (1973, 1975), Leech (1983) and Brown & Levinson's theories (1978 [1987]) inherited the same problems. Particularly solving the structure/agency dilemma has been a longstanding preoccupation in modern sociology. Pierre Bourdieu is a sociologist who made this structure/agency issue central to his sociology. He was also concerned with other dichotomies found in modernist theory such as theory/practice, and mind/body dualisms. Bourdieu took drastic measures in his sociology in an attempt to resolve these problems. Having faced similar problems in politeness studies, I turn to Bourdieu as my first 'thinking tool' in order to explore alternative ways in which politeness can be elucidated. In the next two sections, I revisit various dualisms that Bourdieu endeavoured to overcome.

1.2. The structure/agency (objectivism/subjectivism) problem

Bourdieu discusses the problem of structure/agency in terms of the objectivism/subjectivism problem. He had struggled with this issue in exploring ways to make sense out of his own ethnographic materials. In his early career, Bourdieu tried to accept the 'objective' structuralism of Lévi-Straus.[97] Bourdieu started as a self-taught

[97] Lévi-Strauss's structuralism is an application of Saussurean structuralism to anthropology. In *Elementary Structures of Kinship*, he explicitly compares his anthropology objectives with those of phonological linguistics and argues that linguists and social scientists 'do not merely apply the same methods, but are studying the same thing' (1969:493). Through structural linguistics, he discerned 'fundamental and objective realities consisting of systems of relations which are the products of unconscious thought process' (Lévi-Strauss: 1968:58 discussed in Giddens 1987:198).

anthropologist during his service with the French Army in Algeria[98] in the 1950s and returned to Paris in 1960. He then worked as an assistant to a French sociologist, Raymond Aron during which time he came into contact with Lévi-Strauss's structuralism. After Bourdieu had employed a structuralist paradigm in some of his early work, he gradually began to realise the limits of objectivism. Bourdieu wrote:

> Objectivism, which sets out to establish objective regularities (structures, laws, systems of relationships, etc.) independent of individual consciousness and will, introduces a radical discontinuity between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge. (1990b:26)

'Objectivist' sociology explains the structuring of action as the result of external forces but it fails to explain *why* human individuals engage in actual practical action that takes social structure into account. Structuralist approaches in linguistics and anthropology, including Lakoff and Leech's politeness theories, also suffer from a similar problem; they do not actually explain the reasons *why* social actors or language users are motivated to follow rules of politeness (See *Ch.1* 4.).

On the other hand, *'subjectivist' sociology* sees actions as a simple outgrowth from internal factors. It assumes that social life is entirely dependent on the subjective consciousness of the actors such as conscious intentions and calculations as in the rational-actor model of human actions. As discussed in Chapter 2, Brown & Levinson subscribed to the rational actor model. Bourdieu pointed out the problem of rational action theory[99].

> [The rational choice theory] presents a normative model of what the agent should be if he wants to be rational (in the scientist's sense) as a description of the explanatory principle of what he really does. This is inevitable when one chooses to recognize no other principle of reasonable actions than rational intention, purpose, project, no other explanatory principle of the agent's actions than explanation by reasons or by causes which are efficient as reasons, enlightened self-interest (and the utility function) being, strictly

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[98] This came out as a book *Sociologie de L'Algérie* (1958)

[99] What is known as 'rational choice theory' is called 'rational action theory' in Bourdieu's literature.

> speaking, nothing other than the agent's interest as it appears to an impartial observer... (Bourdieu 2000:140).

Bourdieu identifies "two complementary fallacies": on the one hand, *objectivism,* which holds that the action is the mechanical effect of the constraints of external causes; and on the other, *subjectivism,* which holds that the agent acts consciously, and, with full understanding, the action being the product of a calculation of chances and profits (Bourdieu 2000:138). Bourdieu (1990b) shows how problematic this dichotomy is in social science.

> Of all the oppositions that artificially divide social science, the most fundamental, and most ruinous, is the one that is set up between subjectivism and objectivism. The very fact that this division constantly reappears in virtually the same form would suffice to indicate that the modes of knowledge which it distinguishes are equally indispensable to a science of the social world that cannot be reduced either to a social phenomenology or to a social physics. (1990b:25)

Bourdieu's main theoretical project was to develop a sociology which would transcend this objectivist and subjectivist dichotomy. Bourdieu's attempt to overcome the structure/agency dilemma is best summarised in *The Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) and *The Logic of Practice* (1990b).

Bourdieu finds another problem concerning *objectivism*. As part of objectivism social scientists tend to think of social reality in its totality as though they were totally outside the social situation they analyse. The underlying assumption is that there is a complete and potentially permanent logical order already existing behind society or culture, and social scientists have only to decipher it. Bourdieu disagrees with this idea and finds such a totalizing view problematic.

> Objectivism constitutes the social world as a spectacle presented to an observer who takes up a "point of view" on the action, who stands back so as to observe it and, transferring into the object the principles of his relation to the object, conceives of it as a totality intended for cognition alone, in which all interactions are reduced to symbolic exchanges. This point of view is the one

> afforded by high positions in the social structure, from which the social world appears as a representation...and practices are no more than "executions"....
> (Bourdieu 1977:96)

These objectivist social scientists were trying to establish a totalizing view as though they were detached spectators for the sake of claiming objectivity. However, in actual fact, social actors cannot see the whole of society from outside but can only see it from his or her particular position within it. Therefore Bourdieu argues that social scientists who take practice seriously must also look at society through the lens of what actual social actors are experiencing. Bourdieu attempts to capture this in his 'theory of practice' (See 2.1., this chapter). In my view, modern politeness theories have also had a similar problem in establishing an objective theory. In an alternative approach to politeness, we should take practice seriously and try to understand politeness through the lens of actual language users.

1.3. Theory/practice and mind/body dichotomies

Bourdieu was also concerned about other dichotomies found in modernist theory construction, some of which have existed in Western thought since the time of Aristotle. One is a theory/practice dichotomy. It encourages the view that practice is a mere application of theory, a form of rule-following. This dichotomy has been observable in linguistics. Saussurean *langue/parole* and Chomskyan *competence/performance* are good examples of such dichotomies. I have pointed out in Chapter 3 that Leech's and Lakoff's endeavour to establish politeness as pragmatic rules/principles was inspired by the Saussurean linguistics tradition which aimed to establish the 'language system'. Bourdieu points out the weakness of Saussurean structuralism.

> ...Saussurean linguistics privileges the *structure* of signs, that is, the relations between them, at the expense of *practical functions*, which are never reducible, as structuralism tacitly assumes, to functions of communication and knowledge. The limits of Saussurean objectivism are

> never more clearly visible than in its inability to conceive of speech and more generally of practice other than as *execution*, within a logic which, though it does not use the word, is that of the rule to be applied. Objectivism constructs a theory of practice (as execution) but only as a negative by-product or, one might say, waste product, immediately discarded, of the construction of the system of objective relations. (Bourdieu 1977:24) [emphasis in the original]

Under the pretence of drawing methodological distinctions, Saussure made substantive assumptions about language. However, the actual language practice in the real world cannot simply be explained as the application of an idealised language system, 'langue'. Bourdieu strongly opposed this dualism of 'langue' and 'parole', which separates an idealised language system from actual language practice.[100]

Another dualism that modern politeness theories inherited from modernist thinking was a mind/body dualism. The Cartesian supremacy of 'reason' placed the 'mind' in a superior position to the 'body'. Turner (1984:2) writes that "much of sociology is still Cartesian in implicitly accepting a rigid mind/body dichotomy..." Chomsky's 'mentalism' inherited this Cartesian basis. Chomsky was "concerned with discovering a mental reality underlying actual behaviour" (Chomsky 1965:4) and claimed that "linguistic theory" should "contribute to the study of human mental processes and intellectual capacity" (ibid. 46)[101]. Lakoff and Leech accepted Chomskyan mentalism in their framework. Brown & Levinson also accepted the Cartesian supremacy of 'reason' and chose a 'rational actor' model for the Model Person (MP); they argued that choice of the best politeness strategies is made based on MP's rational calculation or computing of Social distance (D) between S and H; Relative power (P) that H has over S and Absolute ranking (R) of imposition in the particular culture. (See *Ch.2* 1.1.(d)) Bourdieu rejected such mind/body dualism, which has been so prevalent in modernist thinking and attempted to achieve a 'mindful

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[100] Bourdieu's view on language and language use will be discussed further in 3.1. in this chapter).
[101] See footnote 24.

embodiment' in his sociology.

2 Bourdieu's Sociology

2.0. Introduction to Bourdieu's sociology

Bourdieu endeavoured to overcome the dichotomies of objectivism/subjectivism, structure/agency, theory/practice, and body/mind, which continue to exist in the epistemological frameworks of modern social science, by means of his innovative approach, in his 'theory of practice'. As politeness studies also faced similar problems (See *Ch.3* 1.2 and 2.), Bourdieu's sociological project which attempt to resolve these problems may potentially offer new possibilities for politeness research as well. Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* is popular among researchers in various disciplines but it is sometimes taken out of context for researchers' convenience. For instance, *habitus* is not a notion which stands alone but is meant to be understood together with its related concepts of 'field' and 'capital'. *Postmodern* politeness researchers, Eelen (2001), Watts (2003) and Mills (2003) also made use of Bourdieu for their alternative approaches to politeness. However, in my view, their interpretation of Bourdieu needs critical reconsideration, which I will discuss later in this chapter (**Section 5**) as I discuss the 'appropriation of Bourdieu' by recent politeness scholars.

For fair treatment of Bourdieu's sociology, in this section (**Section 2**), I will outline what I believe to be fundamental in Bourdieu's sociology. In **2.1.**, I will discuss what he tried to achieve in his 'theory of practice' and in **2.2.**, I will expound his notion of 'habitus', which is central to his 'theory of practice'. In **2.3.**, I will show some advantages of understanding politeness in terms of *habitus*. In **2.4.**, I will discuss how 'field' and 'capital' are related to 'habitus' and in **2.5.**, I will explain how other related notions such as 'doxa' 'misrecognition' and 'symbolic power' are essential in

understanding his sociology and important for understanding the issue of politeness and power.

2.1 Bourdieu's 'theory of practice'

Aiming to transcend dichotomies such as objectivism/subjectivism (structure/agency), theory/practice in social science, Bourdieu argues for a social science which focuses on the doings of the actors, who always possess some practical knowledge of their world even if they cannot articulate it. Bourdieu calls this a ***'theory of practice'***. In his 'theory of practice' he endeavours not only to encapsulate both structure and agency but to show how they are inseparably related. Though it is termed a 'theory', Bourdieu's 'theory of practice' is different from a theory in positivist sociology (Bourdieu 1990b:52). He tries to elucidate what the social actors actually experience in society rather than attempting to establish a totalizing view of society (See 1.2., this chapter). Bourdieu's theory of practice is sometimes termed 'thinking tools'. Wacquant asked Bourdieu during an interview with him, "you cannot deny that there is a theory in your work, or to be more precise, a set of "thinking tools"....of wide – if not universal – applicability" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:160) and Bourdieu agreed with Wacquant and provided the following explanation.

> ...these tools are only visible through the results they yield, and they are not built as such. The ground for these tools...lies in research, in the practical problems and puzzles encountered and generated in the effort to construct a phenomenally diverse set of objects in such a way that they can be treated, thought of, comparatively. (ibid.)

Bourdieu considers *the logic of research* as being "*inseparably empirical and theoretical* [Italics in the original]". 'Theory' for Bourdieu is not a theory for the sake of 'theory'.[102] Bourdieu's 'theory of practice' is a 'thinking tool' in a sense that it enables

[102] Bourdieu (1992) says, "For me theory is not a sort of prophetic or programmatic discourse which originates by dissection or by amalgamation of other theories for the sole purpose of confronting other

one to understand and deal with practical or empirical problems and difficulties and it is produced by and always oriented towards a task (Webb et al. 2002:47). By using a 'theory of practice, he shuns the kind of 'theoreticist theory', which has been seen as the prerequisite for positivist social science. Bourdieu writes:

> The theory of practice as practice insists, contrary to positivist materialism, that the objects of knowledge are constructed, not passively recorded, and, contrary to intellectualist idealism, that the principle of this construction is the system of structured, structuring dispositions, the *habitus*, which is constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions (Bourdieu 1990b:52).

In order to explicate this social actor's practice, Bourdieu has coined many concepts such as 'habitus', 'field' or 'symbolic capital' in his theory of practice. The central notion is *habitus*. Bourdieu said that he used these concepts as a kind of 'shorthand' within the research procedure.

> The function of the concepts I employ is first and foremost to designate, in a kind of shorthand within the research procedure, a theoretical stance, a principle of methodological choice, negative as well as positive. Systematization necessarily comes *ex post,* as fruitful analogies emerge little by little, as the useful properties of the concept are successfully tried and tested. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:161)

Though he may have initially used these concepts as a kind of 'shorthand', Bourdieu tried and tested his notion of 'habitus' across different areas and managed to explicate different sociological phenomena using the same notions of 'habitus' or 'field' throughout his academic career: e.g. Education and pedagogical practice are discussed in *La Reproduction. Éléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement* with Jean-Claude Passeron (1970, in English 1977); social class in *La distinction* (1979, in English 1984); the academic world in *Homo Academicus,* (1984, in English 1988) and linguistic practice in *Language & Symbolic Power* (in part 1982, in English 1991).[103] In

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such pure 'theoreticist theories' " (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:161).

[103] I give the original French titles to show chronological development. In the bibliography, I included

other words, Bourdieu's major concepts within his theory of practice did not change over the years.

2.2. Habitus

(a). Social life as a game

Bourdieu argues that when we perform practical tasks we are not necessarily following *rules*. Bourdieu does not believe that rules or structures can sufficiently explain our practices as Lakoff or Leech have attempted to do. Nor does Bourdieu accept the idea that human action can be reduced to goal-oriented conscious rational calculation as is assumed in Brown & Levinson's theory. In order to convey his understanding of social life, Bourdieu employs the metaphor of '(athletic) game' like, for example, rugby which he played himself. Games are strategic and tactical. Players cannot play a game simply by comprehending the rules. As team games always require improvisation, it requires a constant awareness of and responsiveness to one's opponents or fellow team members, anticipating their next moves. There are a variety of possible approaches to each game and to each moment in the game.

> The good player, who is so to speak the game incarnate, does at every moment what the game requires. That presupposes a permanent capacity for invention, indispensable if one is to be able to adapt to indefinitely varied and never completely identical situations…(Bourdieu 1990a:63)

He argues that in order to play effectively in any particular game, we need not only an understanding of the rules, but a practical appreciation of the game, a sense of how to play. Players must have practical knowledge, the non-theoretical knowledge that builds up as a result of actually playing in a game. These non-theoretical skills all require a huge amount of learned knowledge which cannot be put into words.

Bourdieu claims that human activity also involves a combination of discursive

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English translations of these books.

awareness and unconscious skills as in a game. We learn practical abilities not by following the rules but through repetition. We can only do it well when it becomes habitual. Bourdieu called such an embodied sense or capacity that each player has of the game 'habitus'. Bourdieu points out that compared with sports games, in which the field (the pitch or board on which it is played, the rules and the outcome at stake, etc) is clearly seen, the game of social life is less explicit.

> ...in the social fields, which are the products of a long, slow process of automatization, and therefore, so to speak, games 'in themselves' and not 'for themselves' one does not embark on the game by a conscious act, one is born into the game with the game...(1990b:67)

(b). Habitus as a feel for the game, practical sense

Players must have a sense of the necessity and logic of the game. *Habitus* is the sense of the game. Bourdieu calls it 'feel for the game' (1990b:66, 1990a:61). It is "the practical mastery of the logic or of the immanent necessity of the game – a mastery acquired by experience of the game, and one which works outside conscious control and discourse (in the way that, for instance, techniques of the body do)" (Bourdieu 1990a:61). It is "social game embodied and turned into a second nature. Nothing is simultaneously freer and more constrained than the action of the good player" (ibid. 63).

> Having a feel for the game is having the game under the skin; it is to master in a practical way the future of the game; it is to have a sense of the history of the game. While the bad player is always off tempo, always too early or too late, the good player is the one who *anticipates*, who is ahead of the game. Why can she get ahead of the flow of the game? Because she has the immanent tendencies of the game in her body, in an incorporated state: she embodies the game. (Bourdieu 1998:80-81)

Bourdieu also calls *habitus* a 'practical sense'. Bourdieu (1990b) explains this as follows:

> Practical sense is a quasi-bodily involvement in the world which presupposes no representation either of the body or of the world, still less of their relationship. It is an immanence in the world through which the world imposes its imminence, things to be done or said, which directly governs

> speech and action. It orients 'choices' which, though not deliberate, are no less systematic, and which, without being ordered and organised in relation to an end, are none the less charged with a kind of retrospective finality. (1990b:66)

This practical sense, which is an embodied sensibility, makes possible practical improvisation in the social game. Anticipation in social games is not merely a conscious choice but something we do pre-reflectively. It is a product of 'practical sense' of a particular social game. "This sense is acquired beginning in childhood, through participation in social activities" (Lamaison & Bourdieu 1986:112). It is "the product of the work of inculcation" (Bourdieu 1977:85). Through the approval or disapproval of parents and of others around us, we develop a characteristic way of generating new actions, of improvising the moves of the game of our lives. Much of the socialization process is experienced in bodily terms, as parts of who we are and of how we exist in the world.

(c). Habitus as systems of durable, transposable dispositions

Bourdieu has various definitions of *habitus*. In *The Logic of Practice* he defines it as

> systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor. (Bourdieu 1990b:53)

It might be helpful to break down this long complicated definition into different characteristics. *First, habitus is systems of durable, transposable dispositions.* By disposition, Bourdieu means "a system of cognitive and motivational structures" (Bourdieu 1990b:53). He says that this disposition is durable and transposable. *Second, habitus generates practices.* In other places Bourdieu writes that *habitus* is "an acquired

system of generative scheme" (1990b:55) or "the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisation...[which produces] practices" (1977:78). *Third, practices generated by habitus are always adapted to the situation. Habitus* generates an infinite number of practices but yet the practices are always within the constraints and limits required by social conditions that are relatively unpredictable. In other words, habitus tends to generate all the 'reasonable', 'common-sense' behaviours (and only these) which are possible within the limits of the objective regularities of particular social conditions, and which are in accordance with the specific logic of the particular field (Bourdieu 1990b:55). Thus *habitus* has an "infinite yet strictly limited generative capacity" (1990b:55). *Fourth, habitus unconsciously or pre-reflectively generates practice*, i.e. "without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends (Bourdieu 1990b:53") or "without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor" (Bourdieu 1990b:53). In other words, "The *habitus* is a spontaneity without consciousness or will, opposed as much to the mechanical necessity of things without history in mechanistic theories as it is to the reflexive freedom of subjects 'without inertia' in rationalist theories" (Bourdieu 1990b:56). H*abitus* is the source of the series of "moves which are objectively organised as strategies without being the product of a genuine strategic intention" (Bourdieu 1977:73). *Fifth, the actions generated by habitus are always regulated, i.e. appropriate to the situation though they are not the product of obedience to rules.*

(d). Habitus as social order inscribed in bodies, bodily hexis

Bourdieu claims that "[t]he relation to body is a fundamental dimension of the *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990b:72)". He understands the body as form of engagement with the world: "practical sense is a quasi-bodily involvement in the world" (Bourdieu1990b:66). Brown & Levinson's Model Person was endowed with 'rationality' and 'face' but

Bourdieu (2000:138) argues that "social agents are endowed with habitus, inscribed in their bodies". The notion of *habitus* "illuminates the circular process whereby practices are incorporated within the body, only then to be regenerated through the embodied work and competence of the body" (Crossley 2001:106). According to Bourdieu, through socialization, we are inculcated in our mind and the social order is inscribed in our bodies. While modernist thinking was haunted by the Cartesian mind/body dualism, Bourdieu provides a healthy alternative in understanding in the mind/body relations – bodily and cognitive dimensions of *habitus* are integrally related. Through the notion of *habitus,* Bourdieu has overcome the body/mind dichotomy (Crossly 2001:161).

Bourdieu employs the word 'hexis' to explain the 'embodiment' of *habitus.* This word *hexis* "is used to signify deportment, the manner and style in which actors 'carry themselves': stance, gait, gesture, etc." (Jenkins 2002:75). Webb et al. (2002:x) describes *bodily hexis* as "the physical attitude and dispositions which emerge in individuals as a result of the relationships between particular fields and individuals' habitus". Bourdieu explains the 'embodied' nature of *habitus* as follows: "the principles em-bodied in this way are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness, and hence cannot be touched by voluntary, deliberate transformation, cannot even be made explicit" (Bourdieu 1977:94).

(e). Habitus as embodied history

Bourdieu also claims that the *habitus* is historically constituted and reconstituted.

> the habitus, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tends to guarantee the 'correctness' of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms. (Bourdieu 1990b: 54).

Habitus is acquired by individuals through experience and explicit socialisation in early life. The whole of life and subsequent experience is a process of adjustment of subjectivity with objective reality (Jenkins 2002:79-80). Habitus is a product of both individual and collective history. Webb et al. (2002:44) explain that *habitus* is a product of an individual's cultural history that are internalised and continue with us across different contexts. Through socialisation, individuals have internalised social structure as embodied history, *habitus*. Habitus enables us to respond to different contexts in different ways allowing for improvisation, but our actions are always largely regulated by where (and with whom) we have been in a culture or society. "The habitus – embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product" (Bourdieu 1990b:56).

Bourdieu incorporated *time* into his 'theory of practice' by using the notion of *habitus*, internalised structure as embodied history. "To restore to practice its practical truth", he argues, "we must therefore reintroduce time into the theoretical representation of a practice, which, being temporally structured, is intrinsically defined by its *tempo*" (Bourdieu 1977: 8). Bourdieu writes:

> The habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history. The system of dispositions – a past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future by making itself present in practices structured according to its principles, an internal law relaying the continuous exercises of the law of external necessities (irreducible to immediate conjunctual constraints) – is the principle of continuity and regularity which objectivism discerns in the social world without being able to give them a rational basis. (Bourdieu 1977:82)

Habitus is not only itself the product of history but also produces more history by generating practices. *Habitus* tends to confirm and reinforce what was present in the past and perpetuate it into the future. Thus *habitus* is a principle of continuity.

2.3. Some advantages of understanding politeness in terms of habitus

I have only looked at the notion of *habitus* in Bourdieu's theory of practice. but *habitus* alone, in my view, offers a very different approach towards understanding politeness in contrast to modern politeness theories. Brown & Levinson explained politeness as strategic action, resulting from conscious rational calculation. Lakoff and Leech conceived politeness to be pragmatic rules/principles that speakers are expected to observe. In Bourdieu's theory of practice, politeness would instead be explained in terms of *habitus*.[104] As discussed earlier, *habitus* is described as a 'practical sense', 'a feel for the game', a 'system of durable transposable disposition', 'embodied history', and 'social order inscribed in bodies'. We have acquired our *habitus* through our socialisation, i.e. learning how to behave appropriately occupying different positions in different social spaces since childhood. When we face new social situations, we are already predisposed to act in certain ways. We act strategically, but without consciously being strategic and we do not feel constraints, but our actions fall within the limits of what the social situation requires. It might be useful at this point to briefly mention some advantages of understanding politeness in terms of *habitus*. After I expound other essential notions in Bourdieu's theory of practice, I will summarise what Bourdieu could provide for an alternative approach to politeness in **Section 4**.

First, Bourdieu's theory of practice overcomes the dichotomies between society (structure) and *individuals (agency) or objectivism and subjectivism.* Bourdieu writes:

> Through the *habitus*, the structure of which it is the product governs, not along the paths of a mechanical determinism, but within the constraints and limits initially set on its inventions. This infinite yet strictly limited generative capacity is difficult to understand only so long as one remains locked in the usual antimonies – which the concept of *habitus* aims to

[104] Sometimes it seems difficult to demarcate *linguistic habitus* out of general *habitus*. As Bourdieu explains in his notion of *bodily hexis*, paralinguistic behaviour and other bodily features are often inseparable from linguistic practice.

> transcend – of determinism and freedom, conditioning and creativity, consciousness and the unconscious, or the individual and society. Because the *habitus* is an infinite capacity for generating products – thought, perceptions, expressions and actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and conditional freedom it provides is as remote from creation of unpredictable novelty as it is from simple mechanical reproduction of conditions. (1990b:55)

Politeness theories, like modern sociology in general, face structure/agency (objectivism/subjectivism) problems. As I have suggested, Lakoff and Leech were structure-centred while B&L were agency-centred. Both approaches partially explained politeness but were trapped in the objectivism/subjectivism dualism. Through the notion of *habitus*, Bourdieu transcended the dichotomy of objectivism/subjectivism. The notion of *habitus* allows us to explain politeness without falling into the total determinism of objectivism or into the total freedom of subjectivism. *Habitus* also portrays human actors as being neither totally *conditioned* by system or structure nor being totally free to exercise *creativity* without any structural constraint. The notion of *habitus* allows us to encapsulate both elements of these dichotomies, i.e. structure and agency, determinism and freedom, conditioning and creativity, consciousness and unconsciousness in understanding politeness. However, politeness does not have to be interpreted as conscious rational action as in B&L's theory. *Habitus* allows us to explain that acts of politeness are sometimes conscious but at other times quite unconscious and more pre-reflexive.

Second, an alternative approach to politeness using Bourdieu's theory of practice transcends the theory/practice dichotomy. Many disciplines including linguistics unconsciously accepted a theory-practice formula as the basic assumption of modern scientific theorisation. Lakoff, Leech and B&L all inherited the theory/practice dualism. They all aimed to establish a theory which they presumed would explain practice as its application. Bourdieu opposed the idea that theory always precedes

practice. He refused to establish a 'theory' in the positivist sense. and proposed the 'theory of practice', which does not split theory from practice. An alternative approach to politeness does not aim to establish a theory from which practice must follow as its execution, but directly attempt to elucidate 'practice' itself. That means that we elucidate politeness as actual interlocutors perceive it. The aim is not longer to establish a meta-narrative of what some universal notion of politeness might be.

Thirdly, understanding politeness in terms of habitus allows us to overcome the mind/body dualism which has long existed in modernist academic theories. Modernist theories tend to focus on cognitive aspects assuming that human cognition guides the action. A good example is the rational choice theory that B&L adopted: its underlying assumption is that rational calculation guides all human action. Bourdieu, however, gave 'body' an important place in his theory of practice. We have "a quasi-bodily involvement in the world" (Bourdieu 1990b:66) through socialisation. Body has become the repository of an ingrained disposition to generate certain actions, and certain ways of behaving. The *habitus* is inscribed in the body and forms a dimension of *bodily hexis*. The body is the site of incorporated history. (See 2.2 (d), this chapter) Understanding politeness in terms of *habitus* helps us to overcome the mind/body dualism and have amore balanced understanding of mind and body. *Habitus*, the practical sense of what is appropriate has become embodied in us through our socialisation. People do not produce appropriate actions by rational calculation as described in 'rational choice theory' but rather through *habitus*, they are predisposed to act appropriately.

Fourthly, Bourdieu incorporated 'time' or 'historicity' into his theory of practice through the notion of habitus, which is an embodied history – "past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future" (Bourdieu 1977:82). Neither the structure-centred approach nor the agency-centred approach were able to

incorporate *time* into their frameworks satisfactorily. Leech and Lakoff, who saw politeness as pragmatic rules/principles could not accommodate time into their theory. The time element does not come into play either in B&L's theory. This is partly due to the presuppositions to which these theorists subscribed, that modern social sciences ought to be timeless, ahistorical or universal in their approach. On the other hand, Bourdieu could incorporate *time* into his theory of practice through the notion of habitus: *habitus*, the practical sense which has been instilled into the body as a living memory pad, i.e. embodied history, will produce and reproduce actions, which are matched to the demands of particular situations. Blommaert (2005a:223) also acknowledged the inclusion of time in Bourdieu's sociology using the expression, "historical embeddedness of habitus". Action is generated by *habitus*, embodied history, nurtured or inculcated through long time socialisation. Historicity is an essential element in understanding politeness, because our sense of what is appropriate is not based on universal rationality as modernists claim, but it is an embodied history of the particular social structure into which we were inculcated. Bourdieu's theory of practice has overcome the Cartesian Anxiety that the truth can be only observable from some alleged vantage point outside of the flux of history. This is one of the significant elements of a postmodern approach to politeness, which I will discuss in the Conclusion (the final chapter of this thesis).

2.4. Field and capital

Bourdieu's *habitus* is not uniform throughout society. As these particular situations vary, *habitus* senses what is appropriate and generates different yet appropriate actions accordingly. Bourdieu uses the notion 'field' to explain this. In this section. I will introduce the notion of 'field' and 'capital', which are concepts related to 'habitus' in

Bourdieu's theory of practice and discuss their relevance for politeness studies.

(a). Field as a site of struggle

Bourdieu employs the notion of *field* into which different social activities are organized.[105] Bourdieu describes a 'field' as follows:

> In analytic terms, a field may be defined as a network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their experience and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situations (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.). (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:97)

Jenkins (2002:85) explains this complex notion of *field* in much simpler terms. It is "a structured system of social positions – occupied either by individuals or institutions – the nature of which defines the situation for their occupants." It is also "a system of forces which exist between these positions; a field is structured internally in terms of power relations" (ibid.). Bourdieu explains that "[i]n highly differentiated societies, the social cosmos is made up of a number of such relatively autonomous social microcosms, i.e. spaces of objective relations that are the site of a logic and a necessity that are *specific and irreducible* to those that regulate other fields" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:97). This social microcosm is called 'field'. The *field* can be cultural, political, or educational etc. and each *field* is defined by virtue of its content and has its own distinctive logic and stakes at play.

Bourdieu also explains *field* using 'game'. *Field* is "a space in which a game takes place [*espace de jeu*], a field of objective relations between individuals or institutions who are competing for the same stake" (Bourdieu 1984b:197 quoted in Moi

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[105] Bourdieu believes that the reality of social world needs to be analysed in relational terms. "[t]o think in terms of field is to *think relationally* [Italic in the original]" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:96).

1991: 1021). "We have an *investment in the game, illusio*[106] (from *ludus,* the game): players are taken in by the game, they oppose one another, sometimes with ferocity, only to the extent that they concur in their belief…in the game and its stakes" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:98).[107]

Positions in the *field* are determined by the distribution of different kinds of *capital*. Bourdieu uses the analogy of games of cards to explain the notion of *capital*.

> We also have *trump cards*, that is master cards whose force varies depending on the game: just as the relative values of the card changes with each game, the hierarchy of the different species of capital (economic, social cultural symbolic) varies across various fields. (ibid.)

In other words, possession of *capital* makes a difference by occupying a position of power in particular fields. Therefore people are "concerned with the preservation or improvement of their positions with respect to the defining capital of the field" (Jenkins 2002:85). Bourdieu mentions four kinds of capital: 1) *economic capital* – material wealth in the form of money, stocks and shares, and property, 2) *social capital* – various kinds of valued relationships with significant others, 3) *cultural capital* – knowledge, skills and other cultural acquisitions, as exemplified by educational or technical qualifications or forms of language, and 4) *symbolic capital* – accumulated prestige, or honour. Various types of capital can be exchanged for other types of capital. In other words, all *capital* is mutually 'convertible'.

Bourdieu designed his concept of *field* as a site of struggle. It is a social arena within which struggles take place over specific resources or access to them (Jenkins 2002:84). If the field is a site of struggle, what is at stake? Moi (1991:1021) answers:

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[106] Webb et al (2002:xiii) explain *illusio* as follows: "the fact of being caught up in and by the game, of believing that the game is worth playing and recognising its stakes. A politican, for example will demonstrate *illusio* by believing that the political field constitutes the 'only game in town'".

[107] Each 'field' involves different games and each social game requires a different *feel for the game*. *Habitus* as *a feel for the game* senses what is possible, impossible and probable for individuals in their specific locations in a stratified social order (Swarts 1997:106).

"[g]enerally speaking, any agent in the field may be assumed to seek maximum power and dominance within it. The aim is to *rule* the field, to become the instance which has the power to confer or withdraw *legitimacy* from other participants in the game" (Moi 1991:1021). Bourdieu defines legitimacy as follows: "[a]n institution, action or usage which is dominant, but not recognized as such, that is to say, which is tacitly accepted, is legitimate" (Bourdieu 1984b: 110 in Moi 1991:1021). Bourdieu sometimes uses *market* as an alternative to the notion of *field* (e.g. Bourdieu 1991:66-89). As arenas of struggle, *fields* are regulated by a relationship between supply and demand. The notion of *market* allows vocabulary like 'capital' in explaining the competitive nature of the *field* (Jenkins 2002:87).

(b). Practice as the product of encounter between 'habitus' and 'field'

Bourdieu claims that a particular practice should be seen as the product of an encounter between an individual's *habitus* and a particular *field,* which are 'compatible' or 'congruent' with one another. Individuals are already predisposed to act in certain ways, because they are the product of particular life histories which are preserved through their particular *habitus*-es. As stated, B&L subscribed to rational action theory, which explains social actions as the product of conscious rational calculation. Bourdieu says that rationality does not explain them. He argues that each *field* generates its own specific *habitus,* "a system of disposition adjusted to the game [of the field]" (Bourdieu 1984b:34 quoted in Moi 1991:1021). Individuals need to be "ready to play the game, equipped with the habitus which enables them to know and recognize the immanent laws of the game, the stakes and so on" (Bourdieu 1984b:110 quoted in Moi 1991:1021).

In *Distinction* (1984a:101), Bourdieu expresses the relationship between *habitus, capital* and *field* in the form of an equation:

[(habitus)(capital)] + field = practice

Bourdieu claims that "practice cannot be deduced either from the present conditions which may seem to have provoked them or from the past conditions which have produced the habitus..[but from their] interrelationship...."(1990b:56).[108] Bourdieu explains linguistic practices as an encounter of *habitus* and linguistic market (field), which I will discuss further in **Section 3**.

Modern politeness researchers were preoccupied with establishing universal principles of politeness. Brown & Levinson assume that 'rationality' is "the only satisfactory explanatory scheme" (B&L 1987:55) for such task. (See *Ch.2* 1.0) In Bourdieu's sociology, practice is seen as the product of encounter between *habitus* and *field.* As the field and positions which individuals take in the field vary, what is expected as polite/impolite behaviour will also vary. Bourdieu's theory of practice accommodates a heterogeneous sense of appropriateness. Bourdieu's understanding that linguistic practice is the product of encounter between *habitus* and *field*, allows us to explain heterogeneous notions of politeness/impoliteness, which works well for the *postmodern* approach to politeness, which no longer aims to establish one grand narrative. The same utterance can be appropriate or inappropriate depending on the *fields* and the positions that the particular individual takes in the *field.*

2.5. Doxa, misrecognition, symbolic power

'Doxa', 'misrecognition' and 'symbolic power' are other important notions in Bourdieu's theory of practice, which are particularly useful in explaining the relation

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[108] Bourdieu argues that the distinctive life-styles which are characteristic of people of a particular social class are defined objectively and sometimes subjectively in and through their mutual relationships. He explains class distinction with the notion of *class habitus*, which is "the internalized form of class conditions and of the conditioning it entails" (1984a:101). For instance, the experience of working class and middle class children differs on account of the capital possessed by their families and opportunities and constraints this generates. This is then registered corporeally as part of their *class habitus* (Crossley 2001:98).

between politeness and power. The notion of *doxa*, *misrecognition* and *symbolic power* explains how the sense of what is appropriate is geared to what is advantageous to the dominant group in any particular society.

(a). Doxa and misrecognition

Most people take themselves and their social world somewhat for granted, because the acquisition of *habitus* is historical to the extent that the 'rules of the game' are *incorporated*, becoming, as we say, second nature. Bourdieu refers to this using the word '*doxa*'.

> Doxa is the relationship of immediate adherence that is established in practice between a habitus and the field to which it is attuned, the pre-verbal taking-for-granted of the world that follows practical sense. Enacted belief, instilled by the childhood learning that treats the body as a living memory pad, an automation that 'leads the mind unconsciously along with it'.... Practical sense, social necessity turned into nature, converted into motor schemes and body automatisms, is what causes practices, in and through what makes them obscure to the eyes of their producers, to be *sensible*, that is, informed by a common sense. (Bourdieu 1990b:68-69)

Doxa is the taken-for-granted, preconscious understanding of the world and our place in it. Bourdieu (1977) compares *doxa* with 'orthodoxy' and 'heterodoxy'. Orthodoxy is "straight, or rather *straightened* opinion...exists only in the objective relationship which opposes it to heterodoxy, that is, by reference to the choice – *heresis*, heresy – made possible by the existence of competing possibilities and to the explicit critique of the sum total of the alternatives not chosen that the established order implies" (Bourdieu 1977:169). Orthodoxy and heterodoxy are the right (+) or wrong (-) opinions, which delimit 'the universe of possible discourse'. On the other hand, *doxa* is in 'the universe of the undisputed', which lies totally outside of 'the field of opinion or universe of discourse (or argument)'. The following diagram illustrates this well:

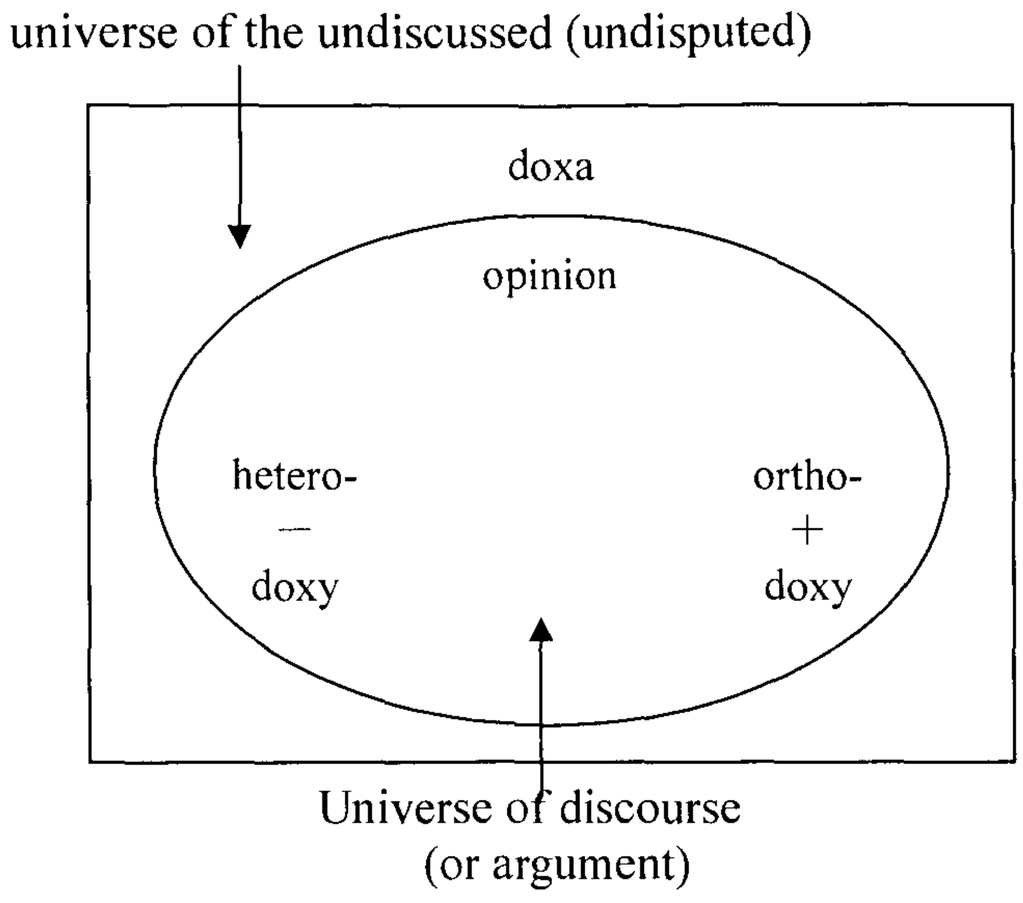

Fig. 4.1. Doxa, Orthodoxy, and Heterodoxy [title not in the original] (Bourdieu 1977:168)

Calhoun (2000:711) describes *doxa* as "felt reality, what we take not as beyond challenge but before any possible challenge". He also points out that *doxa* appears to us as simply the way things are, but in fact it is a socially produced understanding.

Doxa also implies *misrecognition. Misrecognition* is a partial and distorted understanding of things in the world that are systematically distributed through *habitus.* So it is undisputedly *misrecognised* as legitimate. Bourdieu (2000) writes:

> The agent engaged in practice knows the world…too well, without objectifying distance, takes it for granted, precisely because he is caught up in it, bound up with it; he inhabits it like a garment…or a familiar habitat. He feels at home in the world because the world is also in him, in the form of habitus (Bourdieu 2000:142-3)

We feel so comfortable within our roles within the social world that they seem like our second nature and we forget how we have actually been produced as particular kinds of people (Webb et al. 2002:xiv). Another definition of *misrecognition* is "the process whereby power relations are perceived not for what they objectively are but in a form which renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder" (Bourdieu and Passeron

1977:xiii). The unanimity of *doxa* is "the absolute form of recognition of legitimacy through misrecognition of arbitrariness since it is unaware of the very question of legitimacy, which arises from competition for legitimacy and hence from conflict between groups claiming to possess it" (Bourdieu 1977:168). Understanding politeness in terms of *habitus* has overthrown the *modernist* foundation of rational judgment endorsed by Descartes and Kant. The notion of *doxa* highlights that *habitus,* our sense of appropriateness, is a socially produced understanding and a felt reality and has become second nature through our socialisation and no matter how distorted our understanding of the world may be, we misrecognise it as legitimate and at the root of misrecognition, there is *symbolic power.*

(b). Symbolic power, symbolic violence

Bourdieu (1977:169) points out that dominant groups or classes have an interest in defending the integrity of *doxa*. What characterises socialisation into a *habitus* is actually the imposition primarily of dominant modes of expression or ways of seeing the world. Through our *habitus*, we misrecognise what is dominant as being legitimate. This representation of *legitimacy* contributes to the exercise and perpetuation of power (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977:5). Thus power is seldom exercised as overt physical force, but instead it is transmuted into a *symbolic* form. Bourdieu calls this *symbolic power*, which is an 'invisible power' which is 'misrecognised' as such and thereby 'recognised' as legitimate (Thompson in Bourdieu 1991:23). Sometimes it becomes *symbolic violence*, when it becomes "the imposition of systems of symbolism and meaning (i.e. culture) upon groups or classes in such a way that they are experienced as legitimate. This legitimacy obscures the power relations which permit that imposition to be successful" (Jenkins 2002:104). As long as it goes on being accepted as legitimate, culture adds its own force to such power relations, and contributes to their systematic

reproduction (ibid.).

Bourdieu claims that education or 'pedagogic action' is the most powerful force for reproducing power relationships, because learning is an 'irreversible process' (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977:43-44) in which a child plays a mostly passive role. 'Pedagogic action' entails 'pedagogic work', which is

> a process of inculcation which must last long enough to produce a durable training, i.e. a habitus, the product of internalization of the principles of a cultural arbitrary capable of perpetuating itself after PA [pedagogic action] has ceased and thereby perpetuating in practices the principles of the internalized arbitrary (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977:31).

The notion of *cultural arbitrary*[109] above frequently appears in *Reproduction in Education, Society and Cuture* (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977), which is also an important notion. Webb et al. (2002:x) explains *cultural arbitrary* as follows: "the differential power relations pertaining to our culture have no necessary basis but are rather arbitrarily constructed to reflect the interests of dominant groups". Jenkins (2002:105) writes that "[b]ehind all culture lies the arbitrary sanction of 'pure de facto power'. Bourdieu uses the term 'symbolic violence' to describe this "imposition of particular systems of symbolism and meaning (i.e. culture) upon groups or classes in such a way that they are experienced as legitimate" (Jenkins 2002:104). The legitimacy obscures the power. Bourdieu claims that "all pedagogic action (PA) is, objectively, symbolic violence insofar as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power" (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977:5).

Motivated by the *modernist* theory requirements of objectivity and rationality, modern politeness theorists endeavoured to establish a rational objective principle of politeness. However, Bourdieu's notions of *doxa*, *misrecognition* and *symbolic power* reveals that the sense of what is appropriate is not actually 'neutral' or 'objective' as

[109] 'Cultural arbitrary' is Bourdieu's technical term. Bourdieu's translator seems to have used the word 'arbitrary' (normally an adjective.) as a noun here.

modernist researchers wished it to be, but is rather 'biased' toward the dominant group in society. Commonly more respect and polite behaviour is expected toward the dominant or ruling class in society by the less dominant and not vice versa. Bourdieu's *symbolic power* helps to elucidate the interrelation between power and politeness.[110]

3. Linguistic politeness in Bourdieu's framework

Bourdieu was very concerned with language and dealt with linguistic practice in his theory of practice. Bourdieu even explicitly discusses 'politeness' or 'tact' in some of his works. His works focusing on language were published as *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991). In this section, I will first introduce Bourdieu's view of language and of language practice in general (in **3.1.**,) and in **3.2.**, I will discuss how he deals with 'politeness' in his theory of practice.

3.1 Bourdieu's view of language and of language practice

Bourdieu discusses his views on existing approaches to language and language practice such as the Saussurean/Chomskyan view of language as an idealised language system, Austin's Speech Act Theory and Interactionist Approach. Through interacting with these authors, he presents his own ideas about language and language practice.

(a). Legitimate language, normalized language

As discussed in 1.3. Bourdieu criticises the Saussurean focus on an idealised linguistic system (*langue*) as the main object of linguistic study. "Saussure resolves the question of the social and economic conditions of the appropriation of language without ever needing to raise it" (Bourdieu 1991:43). Similarly, he criticises Chomsky as follows:

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[110] Lakoff's claim that women are expected to be more polite than men and that women and women embrace this as a virtue (See *Ch.1* 1.1.(f).) can be explained well by Bourdieu's notion of *symbolic power.*

> Chomsky has the merit of explicitly crediting the speaking subject in his universality with the perfect competence which the Saussurean tradition granted him tacitly: 'Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an *ideal speaker-listener*, in *a completely homogeneous speech-community*, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such *grammatically irrelevant* conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention or interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance" (Bourdieu 1991:43-44).

Bourdieu sees that "Chomskyan 'competence' is simply another name for Saussurean *langue*" (Bourdieu 1991:44) and rejects both the Saussurean view of *langue* and Chomsky's *competence*, in which language practice is treated as the *execution* of an abstract linguistic system (See 1.2., this chapter). Instead Bourdieu claims that language practice results from, and is moulded by, those relationships of power and inequality which are pervasive features of all human societies.

Saussure and Chomsky treat 'idealised language' as neutral, and make it an object of linguistic study. What is considered as idealised language i.e. a normative model of correct usage, is in Bourdieu's view, nothing but a particular set of linguistic practices, which have become the dominant and legitimate language determined by existing social-historical conditions. In this sense, it may be called '*victorious* language' (Thompson in Bourdieu 1991:5). Bourdieu views the legitimation of language as a political act. A certain variety of a language is usually regarded as the standard language in any country and others are treated as mere dialects. Similarly, particular language(s) come to be recognized as official language(s) in a country where more than one language is spoken. Hanks (2005:76) described the legitimation of language as follows: "Standardization and legitimation sanctions a certain way of speaking, rewarding some while silencing others. The effect is to intimidate and censor speech without any discrete act of intimidation or censoring".

Bourdieu claims that it is the education system which plays a decisive role in

the process which leads to the construction and legitimation of an official language, just as pedagogic actions play a significant role in reproducing power relations in society (Bourdieu 1991:48). Recognition of the legitimacy of the official language is "not an intentional act of accepting a 'norm'" but it is "inscribed, in a practical state, in dispositions which are impalpably inculcated, through a long and slow process of acquisition, by the sanction of the linguistic market" (Bourdieu 1991:51). In other words, we submit to *symbolic power* without even realizing it, because we are already predisposed to accept it through our *habitus*. Just as there are legitimate languages, there are legitimate usages. Bourdieu argues that we have learned to recognize certain usages as legitimate usages within our *habitus*. Then what we recognise as appropriate usage is not something universally recognised as being that way, but the particular language usages came to be recognised as appropriate in a particular community or society. Individuals who went through socialisation in that community, have learned to recognize it within *habitus*.[111]

(b). On Austin's Speech Act Theory

As stated in earlier chapters, modern politeness theories have been influenced by Speech Act Theory. Leech and B&L specifically used Speech Act Theory in their theoretical framework. Bourdieu initially evaluated Austin positively because of his consideration of the social conditions necessary for communication: Austin recognises that the efficacy of *performative* utterances is inseparable from the existence of an 'institution' which defines the conditions (such as the place, the time and the agent). So-called felicity conditions must be fulfilled in order for an utterance to be effective.[112]

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[111] I will discuss this further in the Conclusion chapter as I discuss the perception or evaluation of politeness.

[112] Austin claims that certain utterances perform actions as in the case of 'I do' in a marriage ceremony or 'I name this ship Queen Elizabeth'. For such sentences (*performatives)* to be 'felicitous', they must be uttered by an appropriate person in accordance with some conventional procedure. Austin termed these

However, Bourdieu initially commented that Austin left the way open for others to think about speech acts purely in linguistic terms (Thompson in Bourdieu 1991:9). In Bourdieu's view,

> [t]he real source of the magic of performative utterances lies in the mystery of ministry, i.e. the delegation by virtue of which an individual – king, priest, spokesman – is mandated to speak and act on behalf of the group, thus constituted in him and by him. More precisely, it lies in the social conditions of the *institution* of the ministry, which constitutes the legitimate representative as an agent capable of acting on the social world through words, by instituting him as a medium between the group and the social world. [underlining added] (Bourdieu 1991:75)

He argued that "Austin's account of performative utterances cannot be restricted to the sphere of linguistics" (Bourdieu 1991: 73). He pointed out that many linguists who read Austin dismissed the fact that 'felicity conditions' are social conditions "in order to return to a narrowly linguistic definition that ignores the market effect" (ibid. 73). In Bourdieu's view, 'social conditions' means social-historical conditions of language use. Bourdieu criticised the inadequacies of Austin's account in his earlier work on language which led some linguists who read Austin not to appreciate fully the implication that the conditions of felicity are primarily social conditions. In later writing, however, Bourdieu corrected his arguments by pointing out that Austin was probably fully aware of the social conditions of performative utterances and that his criticism should have been aimed at the formalist readings which have reduced Austin's socio-logical indications to analysis of pure logic (1990a:28-29).[113] In any case, Bourdieu wanted to stress the social-historical conditions of language use.

'felicity conditions' (See Levinson 1983: 229).

[113] "In this respect, I would like to take this opportunity to correct the impression I may have given of Austin in my work on language. In fact, if people read Austin properly, and he is one of the philosophers I most admire, they would notice that the essential aspects of what I tried to reintroduce into the debate on the performative were already said, or suggested, there." (Bourdieu 1991:28-29).

(c). On the Interactionist approach

Bourdieu also criticised the 'Interactionist' approach for several reasons. Bourdieu does not mention particular theorists by name. Interactionism usually refers to the Symbolic Interactionism associated with Herbert Blumer and the Chicago School (Chicago sociology department). Erving Goffman, who obtained his doctorate at Chicago, also represents Symbolic Interactionism.[114] 'Interactionists' look closely at actual social interaction, because they believe that culture develops out of the way people act toward one another in a way that involves both purpose and meaning. They focus on small levels of social interaction (between individuals or small groups) and for this reason, are called 'micro-level social analysts'. Bourdieu does not agree with the Iinteractionist approach despite their focus on an analysis of actual social practice, i.e. social interaction.[115] He argues that Interactionists tend to reduce relations of power to relations of communication, but in Bourdieu's view, power relations depend on the material and symbolic power accumulated by the agents (or institutions) involved in these relations (Bourdieu 1991:167).

Bourdieu's criticism of the Saussurean/Chomskyan and Interactionist approaches seems to be related to structure/agency problems. The former tends to emphasise structure/system at the expense of decentring agency (social actors or language users). The latter tends to focus on social actors' strategies in the immediate

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[114] Some of the guiding premises of Symbolic Interactionism are as follows: Interactionists assume that people are conscious and self-reflexive beings who actively shape their own behaviour. They believe in a voluntaristic image of human behaviour. Interactionists conceive of society as a *fluid but structured process*. This process is grounded in individual's abilities to assume each other's perspectives, adjust and coordinate their unfolding acts and symbolically communicate and interpret these acts. To understand people's social acts, then, we need to use methods that enable us to discern the meanings they attribute to these acts. Interactionsts believe it is essential to understand those worlds of meaning and to see them as the individuals or groups under investigation see them. (from Sandstrom, et al. 2001:218-9)

[115] He argues that the Interactionist approach "fails to go beyond the actions and reactions, apprehending their directly visible immediacy" and is "unable to discover that different agents' strategies are strictly dependent on their positions in the structure of the distribution of linguistic capital, which can in return be shown to depend, via the structure of changes of access to the educational system, on the structure of class relations" (Bourdieu 1991:64).

communication but fail to see the macro structural issue.

3.2 Politeness in Bourdieu's theory of practice

In this section, I show how Bourdieu dealt with linguistic practice in his theory of practice and how 'tact' or 'politeness' is discussed in his account of linguistic practice.

(a). Linguistic exchange as relations of symbolic power

Bourdieu (1991) explained linguistic exchange in terms of economic concepts such as capital, market and profit.

> Linguistic exchange – the relation of communicating between a sender and a receiver, based on enciphering and deciphering, and therefore on the implementation of a code or a general competence – is also an economic exchange which is established within a particular symbolic relation of power between a producer, endowed with a certain linguistic capital, and a consumer (or a market), and which is capable of producing a certain material or symbolic profit. (Bourdieu 1991:66)

Bourdieu claims that linguistic exchanges are not merely information exchanges but "are also relations of symbolic power in which the power relations between speakers or their respective groups are actualized" (Bourdieu 1991:37). The value and impact of the utterance depends on the relation of power in any particular market. The same discourse may carry different value in different markets. For instance, the more formal the market is, the more imperative is the use of legitimate language, because it is over-ruled by the dominant, i.e. by the holders of legitimate competence authorized to speak with authority (Bourdieu 1991:69).

We have learned to produce a determinate form of speech in a determinate market. This learning process occurs "through exchanges within a family occupying a particular position in a social space and thus presenting the child's imitative propensity with models and sanctions that diverge more or less from legitimate usage" (Bourdieu

1991:82). The primary market is the family and other markets include the school. Bourdieu explains how we have learned our *linguistic habitus.*

> The system of successive reinforcement or refutation has thus constituted in each one of us a certain sense of social value of linguistic usages and of the relation between the different usages and the different markets, which organizes all subsequent perception s of linguistic products, tending to endow it with considerable stability....This linguistic 'sense of place' governs the degree of constraints which a given field will bring to bear on the production of discourse, imposing silence or a hyper-controlled language on some people while allowing other the liberties of a language that is securely established. ...The sense of value of one's own linguistic products is a fundamental dimension of the sense of knowing the place which one occupies in the social space. (Bourdieu 1991:82)

'The sense of place' in the above description shows how social structure has been internalised in one's *habitus,* which puts some constraints on speech construction. But *linguistic habitus* also "tends to function as a practical sense of the acceptability and the probable value of one's own linguistic productions and those of others in different markets" (Bourdieu 1991:77). Linguistic production is affected by anticipation of market sanctions. Bourdieu explicitly writes that this practical sense of acceptability has no resemblance to any form of conscious rational calculation toward the maximization of symbolic profits as in rational action theory (Bourdieu 1991:77).[116] *Linguistic habitus* encourages one to take account of the probable value of discourse during the process of production, which is a kind of "self-censorship – the concessions one makes to a social world by accepting to make oneself acceptable in it" (Bourdieu 1991:77). We will look at this *censorship* more closely in the next section.

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[116] Bourdieu criticises rational action theory (RAT) for forgetting the minimum economic capital necessary for an 'actor' to perceive and seize the potential opportunity for rational calculation. RAT liberally grants its abstract 'actor' all the capacities – the art of estimating and taking chances, the ability to anticipate through a kind of practical induction, the capacity to bet on the possible against the probable for a measured risk, the propensity to invest, access to economic information etc. –, but these can only be acquired under definite social and economic conditions. RAT also assumes the existence of a universal, pre-constituted interest, and is thoroughly oblivious to the social genesis of historically varying forms of interest. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:124-5)

(b). Utterance – an encounter between linguistic habitus and market

Just as Bourdieu sees practice as a product of the dialectical relation between *habitus* and *field*, he sees every utterance as an encounter between the *linguistic habitus,* and the *linguistic market*.

> On the one hand, there are the socially constructed dispositions of linguistic habitus, which imply a certain propensity to speak and to say determinate things (the expressive interest) and a certain capacity to speak, which involves both the linguistic capacity to generate an infinite number of grammatically correct discourses, and the social capacity to use this competence adequately in a determinate situation. On the other hand, there are the structures of the linguistic market, which impose themselves as a system of specific sanctions and censorships. (Bourdieu 1991:37)

"In this encounter between the linguistic habitus and market…, it is the speaker's *anticipation* of the reception which his/her discourse will receive (its 'price') which contributes to *what* is said and *how*" (Jenkins 2002:154). Speakers implicitly and routinely modify their expressions in anticipation of their likely reception. The speakers' assessment of the market conditions and the anticipation of the likely reception of his or her linguistic behaviour operate as internalised constraints on the very process of production. Bourdieu claims that all utterances are to some extent *euphemised* in order to produce what meets the demands of a certain market.

> Discourses are always to some extent *euphemisms* inspired by the concern to 'speak well', to 'speak properly', to produce the products that respond to the demands of a certain market; they are *compromise formations* resulting from a transaction between the expressive interest (what is to be said) and the censorship inherent in particular relations of linguistic productions (whether it is the structure of linguistic interaction or the structure of a specialized field), a censorship which is imposed on a speaker or writer endowed with a certain social competence, that is, a more or less significant symbolic power over these relations of symbolic power. (Bourdieu 1991:78-79) [emphasis in the original]

In Bourdieu's view, utterances are always a compromise between what we ourselves actually want to say and what has to be censored by the demand of the market. Behind

such self-censorship of speech there is *symbolic power*.

(c). Politeness or tact – euphemisation, self-censorship

As utterance is a product of the encounter between linguistic *habitus* and a *linguistic market,* "[t]he definition of acceptability is found not in the situation but in the relationship between a market and a habitus" (Bourdieu 1991:81). Speakers always *censor* their own utterance considering the market conditions at the time of production and modify or euphemise their expressions anticipating their likely reception in the market. Bourdieu explicitly discusses 'tact' or politeness in terms of *censorship* and *euphemism*. He writes:

> What is called tact or adroitness consists in the art of taking account of the relative positions of the sender and the receiver in the hierarchy of different kinds of capital, and also of sex and age, and of the limits inscribed in this relation, ritually transgressing them, if need be, by means of euphemization. The attenuation of the injunction, reduced to zero in 'Here', 'Come' or 'Come here', is more marked in 'If you would be so good as to come this way'. The form used to neutralize 'impoliteness' may be a simple interrogative ('Will you come?"), or a doubly delicate negative question ('Won't you come?'), which acknowledges the possibility of refusal. (Bourdieu 1991:80)

How does Bourdieu explain politeness? It consists in the art of taking account of the relative positions and market conditions, if necessary, by means of euphemization. We are predisposed to exercise this censorship through our *habitus*. Bourdieu claims that all utterances are "the product of a *compromise* between an *expressive interest* and a *censorship* constituted by the very structure of the field in which the discourse is produced and circulates" (Bourdieu 1991:137). In other words, all utterances are to some extent self-censored and euphemised. Bourdieu points out that in some markets such as the higher-society market, a higher degree of censorship may be needed than in some others (Bourdieu 1991:85), but censorship is commonly operative in all linguistic production. In other words, some degree of politeness concern is present in every

utterance.

4. What Bourdieu could provide for an alternative approach to politeness

Bourdieu has provided alternative new ways of understanding politeness and resolved many problems in modern politeness theories. Bourdieu opposes the Saussurean/ Chomskyan tradition of seeing language as an 'idealised language system', to which Lakoff and Leech largely subscribed. Bourdieu claims that what is considered to be 'idealised language' is a particular language practice which is *misrecognised* as legitimate and this usually serves the advantage of the dominant groups in society, which Bourdieu calls *symbolic power*. Bourdieu was concerned with actual 'language practice' rather than with an 'idealised language system'. Bourdieu sees utterance as the product of the encounter between *habitus* and *market.* Speakers through *habitus* censor their own utterances and euphemise them considering the market condition at the time of production. Bourdieu explicates politeness in terms of this *censorship* and *euphemism* and argues that all utterances are to some extent euphemised. Thus for Bourdieu, politeness is operative in every single linguistic production while Brown & Levinson (1987) argued that politeness describes strategies that people use when they encounter Face Threatening Acts (FTA) and wish to minimise their counter-effect.

In section 2.3, I have already shown how Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* has overcome problems in modern politeness theories and provided some advantages. I will recapitulate them and discuss further advantages that Bourdieu's theory of practice provides in order to discover alternative ways of understanding politeness. I have pointed out the following earlier.

1. *Bourdieu's theory of practice has overcome objectivism/subjectivism (structure/ agency) dilemma that impeded Lakoff, Leech and Brown & Levinson.*

2. *Bourdieu's theory of practice transcended the theory/practice dualism.*

3. *Bourdieu did not subscribe to the Cartesian supremacy of mind over body and has overcome the body/mind dualism Through the notion of habitus, embodied sensibility, Bourdieu provided new way of explaining action, which is not necessarily led by the mind's cognitive activity.*

4. *Bourdieu incorporated 'time' into his 'theory of practice' through the notion of habitus as embodied history – a "past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future" (Bourdieu 1977:82).*

5. *While B&L and other theorists aimed to establish some kind of universal principle of politeness, which works for all cultures and languages alike, Bourdieu's 'theory of practice' accommodates the idea that heterogeneous appropriateness is expected in different 'fields'.*

Adding to these five points,

Sixth, Bourdieu's theory of practice recognises the asymmetry of power which exists in linguistic practice. Lakoff (1975) recognised that gender inequality exists in language practice: women are expected to behave more politely than men. So legitimate language for men does not seem to be necessarily the legitimate language for women. Despite her recognition of such inequality, Lakoff could not accommodate heterogeneity in her 'universal' pragmatic rules. Neither Leech nor B&L dealt with such issues in their theories. Bourdieu, on the other hand, recognised that such asymmetry of power exists in linguistic practices, but he did not particularly discuss gender inequality.[117] Asymmetry of power may come from many sorts of differences. The practical competence of speakers is not uniformly distributed through a society. "The constitution of a linguistic market creates the condition for an objective competition in and through which the legitimate competence can function as linguistic capital" (1991:55).[118]

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[117] Bourdieu does speak of 'sexual division of labour'. He observes that bodily differences contribute to this division and they seem to accept this as their bodily hexis. (Bourdieu 1990:72)

118 For instance, the more formal the situation is, the more likely it is that the dominant linguistic competence will function in a particular market as linguistic capital procuring symbolic profit (Bourdieu 1991:70). Different speakers possess different quantities of linguistic capital and the distribution of linguistic capital is related to the distribution of other forms of capital (economic capital, cultural capital etc.) which define the position of an individual within social space. Differences in terms of accent, grammar and vocabulary also are indices of the social positions of speakers and reflections of the

Seventh, Bourdieu recognises that legitimate and appropriate practice is determined by the practice of those who are dominant. Bourdieu claims that "[a]ll linguistic practices are measured against legitimate practices, i.e. the practices of those who are dominant" (1991:53). The dominant always have advantages as they possess more linguistic capital and the less dominant accept it or misrecognise it as legitimate practice (symbolic violence) (See 2.5. (b), this chapter). Then what seems to be accepted as polite behaviour is the dominant group's view legitimised by symbolic power. Lakoff (1975:74) recognised this hegemonic reality present in language practice: "it is the dominant group in a society that establishes stereotypes of the other groups and decides which groups, on the basis of these stereotypes, are "good" or "bad". Lakoff pointed out women not only accept such stereotypes for women's behaviour legitimised by the dominant group, i.e. men, but also embrace it as a virtue (See *Ch.1* 1.1.(e).). Leech and B&L seemed to be oblivious to such factors or did not seem explicitly to discuss them.

5. Appropriation of 'Bourdieu' by recent politeness scholars

Three recent politeness researchers appropriated Bourdieu's sociology in their new approach to politeness. As far as I am aware, Bourdieu was first discussed in politeness studies by Eelen (2001). Watts (2003) and Mills (2003), who were much influenced by Eelen's work, also employed Bourdieu, and particularly his notion of *habitus,* in their discussion. Eelen (2001), Mills (2003) and Watts (2003) all received inspiration from Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, for explaining 'production' as regulated by structure but at

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quantities of linguistic and other capital which they possess. The more linguistic capital that speakers possess, the more they are able to exploit the system of differences to their advantage (Thompson in Bourdieu 1991:18).

the same time allowing for the creativity of individuals. However, I am not sure whether some of their interpretations of Bourdieu's sociology always reflect Bourdieu's original arguments. These scholars seem to have hybridized, modified or altered the original notion of *habitus* to some extent for their new approach to politeness. The parts they felt needed modifying may reflect the limitations or shortcomings of Bourdieu's theory of practice.

In **5.1.**, **5.2.**, and **5.3.**, I will show how Bourdieu has been understood by Eelen (2001), Watts (2003) and Mills (2003) and appropriated in their works.[119] Then, in **5.4.**, I will summarise how these theorists modified or altered some of Bourdieu's arguments in order to make them congruent with their new alternative models of politeness.

5.1. Eelen's (2001) appropriation of Bourdieu

Eelen is one of the first researchers to seriously re-examine the epistemological problems of the major politeness theories. As I mentioned in the **Introduction** of this thesis, Eelen (2001) heralded a new breed of politeness studies by introducing several significant new insights into the field. [120] Eelen's work has stimulated other subsequent researchers such as Watts (2003) and Mills (2003) and pioneered a new era in politeness studies. Having pointed out the problems of Parsonian structural functionalism, by which, he assumes, politeness theories are influenced[121], Eelen turned to Bourdieu's

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[119] Due to the scope of this thesis, I will only expound that part of their models/theories which might have relevance to Bourdieu.

[120] Eelen's major contributions may be summarised as follows: First, Eelen demonstrated that previous researchers' focus have been upon the speaker's production of politeness (2001:96) and the hearer's evaluative behaviour had been markedly missing from the theoretical models (2001:104). Second, he pointed out the conceptual bias toward the polite end of the polite-impolite distinction (2001:98), which resulted in scarcity of research into impoliteness or rudeness. Third, he pointed out how problematic is the distinction between first-order (politeness1) and second-order politeness (politeness2) (2001:43-7, 241-2). Fourth, he recognised that issues of society and the individual are fundamentally important in understanding politeness.

[121] After his metatheoretical analysis of current politeness theorists, Eelen (2001) sets out to sketch an alternative approach in his fifth chapter. Based on Glyn William's claim in *Sociolinguistics: sociolinguistic critique* (1992) that there is a structural functionalist undercurrent in most contemporary sociolinguistic research traditions, Eelen makes the assumption that "[a]lthough Parsons is never

notion of *habitus*.

In **(a).**, I will first show how Eelen's interpreted *habitus* and then in **(b).**, I will discuss Eelen's misinterpretation of the notion of 'discursive over the representation of reality expressed in one of Bourdieu.

(a). Eelen's interpretation of habitus

Eelen, in *A Critique of Politeness Theories* (2001) employed Bourdieu's ideas in several contexts. Based on Bourdieu's theory of practice, Eelen (2001:221) argues that politeness should be studied as a 'practice'. "Although the analytical temptation may be great to construct some sort of overall system of politeness from variable and often contradictory empirical information, politeness should first and foremost be regarded and studied as a *practice*" (Eelen 2001:221). Eelen then draws on Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*. However, Eelen's understanding of *habitus* seems to be somewhat different from Bourdieu's. Eelen (2001) expounds *habitus* as follows:

> The social and material condition prevalent in individual and collective history creates certain predispositions, which function both as enabling and constraining forces, defining a set of practical possibilities which actors unconsciously draw in structuring their behaviour. As such, habitus outlines a social mechanism that caters for regulated behaviour without the need for positing some external objective regulating force. It captures a process of structured or collective individuality…a halfway house between pure mechanistic collective objectivism and pure creative individualist subjectivism. (Eelen 2001:221-2)

Eelen interprets the present action generated by *habitus* as 'a halfway house between pure mechanistic collective objectivism and pure creative individualist subjectivism'. Eelen (2001) also describes present action as 'the middle position' or 'intersection

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mentioned by any of the politeness theories under discussion, many characteristic traits of Parsonian Structural Functionalism can be recognized in their conceptual make-up (2001:188)" and elucidates Talcott Parsons' Structural Functionalism. I agree that Lakoff and Leech's theory exhibits characteristics of structural functionalism, which is why I classified them as a structure-centred approach in chapter 3. However, as I have argued earlier, B&L's theory is an agency-centred approach as their theory focuses on the Model Person (the social actor) and adopts rational choice theory in their theory construction.

between present circumstances and past circumstances'.

> An important factor in accomplishing this middle position is historicity. In a radical interpretation, habitus even *is* historicity, as it describes how past experience mediated present action, creating a new experience which mediates both (the meaning and influence of) past experiences as well as further future action. In this way, present action becomes the intersection between present circumstances and past circumstances, or the transformation of present conditions by past experiences, i.e. by past action, which itself was the mediation of past conditions by anterior experience, and so on. (Eelen 2001:222)

Eelen's terms 'halfway house', 'middle position' and 'intersection' does not seem to capture Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* correctly. Bourdieu (1990:56) also described *habitus* within a temporal framework (See 2.2.(e), this chapter). However, Bourdieu did not actually separate past, present and future but saw them as a continuity realised in *habitus*, which is 'the principle of continuity and regularity'.

> The system of dispositions – a past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future by making itself present in practices structured according to its principles….– is the principle of continuity and regularity which objectivism discerns in the social world without being able to give them a rational basis. (Bourdieu 1977:82)

As *habitus* is the principle of continuity, the past survives in the present and the present is perpetuated into the future through *habitus*. Furthermore, habitus is 'embodied' history: "[T]he habitus – embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product" (Bourdieu 1990b:56). Eelen has not drawn on this embodied aspect of habitus.

Eelen also interprets *habitus* as 'a starting position from which people structure their action'. This shows more clearly how Eelen's interpretation is different.

> Habitus should not be interpreted as weaker or less strict kinds of rules or norms; it does not 'tell' people how to behave, it does not even 'make them do' anything at all. It merely defines a starting position from which people structure their actions, and describes the principle by which this position evolves through time, always renewing itself with every additional social

act (Eelen 2001:222).

Eelen's (2001) understanding of *habitus* as 'a starting position from which people structure their action' gives the impression that individuals are free to structure their action from *habitus*. Eelen's next account also suggests this: "[a]s the social mechanism involved operates primarily on the individual level, such macro-social phenomena are essentially a matter of the individual actor's perception and reactions. The adoption of depreciation of behavioural practices depends on individuals' perception of the linguistic field and their current and aspired places in it." (Eelen 2001:228) Eelen also writes: "The individual *creates* his or her own history, but not randomly: he or she is influenced by past-conditions-turned-into-action as well as by present conditions" (Eelen 2001:222). In all these interpretations, Eelen (2001) seems to assume a greater freedom for human agency (social actor) than Bourdieu actually did. In other words, Eelen's view seems to be moving in the direction of subjectivism.

Let us revisit Bourdieu's widely quoted definition of *habitus*:

> durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of operations necessary in order to attain them (Bourdieu 1990b:53).

Swartz (1997:103) explains that the term 'disposition' is the key to understanding Bourdieu's *habitus*: its two essential components are *structure* and *propensity*. Swartz (1997) explains the two central features of *habitus*: "structured structures" and "structuring structures" as follows:

> Habitus results from early socialization experiences in which external structures are internalized. As a result internalized dispositions of broad parameters and boundaries of what is possible or unlikely for a particular group in a stratified social world develop through socialization. Thus on the one hand, habitus sets structural limits for action. On the other hand, habitus

> generates perception, aspiration, and practices that correspond to the structuring properties of earlier socialization. (Swartz 1997:103)

Swartz also points out that "habitus is fairly resistant to change, since primary socialization in Bourdieu's view is more formative of internal disposition than subsequent socialization experiences. There is an ongoing adaptation process as habitus encounters new situations, but this process tends to be slow, unconscious and tends to alter fundamentally the primary disposition" (Swartz 1997:107).

Eelen (2001:227) also wrote that "a notion of politeness based on habitus is also able to account more naturally for social change and evolution." However, Bourdieu's sociology is not good at explaining social change. Bourdieu's project is often called 'genetic structuralism'. Calhoun (2000:708) explains this as "a sociology that uses the intellectual resources of structural analysis, but approaches structures in terms of the ways in which they are produced and reproduced through action." Calhoun (1995) evaluates Bourdieu's sociology as follows: "Bourdieu's theory is at its best…as a theory of reproduction, and at its weakest as a theory of transformation. In this it shows its structuralist roots" (1995:142). Eelen (2001:222) also emphasized that present behaviour is based on "creative transformation of present conditions from a position based in past experience". While Eelen wishes to emphasize 'creative transformation', Bourdieu's focus is more on 'reproduction'. Bourdieu's *habitus*, being a disposition "makes possible the free production of all the thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the particular conditions of its production – and only those" (Bourdieu 1990b:55).

Eelen draws on Bourdieu's habitus but his interpretation of *habitus* is different from Bourdieu's. To summarise the points, first, Eelen's terms 'halfway house', 'middle position' or 'intersection' does not capture the *habitus*, which is the principle of continuity: the past survives in the present and the present is perpetuated into the future. Second, Eelen gave more freedom to agency that Bourdieu actually did. Third, Eelen

argued that notions of politeness based on *habitus* are able to account for social change and evolution. However, while Bourdieu's theory works well as a theory of reproduction, it is weakest as a theory of transformation. Eelen's interpretation of *habitus* stressing creative transformation is not entirely accurate.

(b). On the notion of 'discursive struggle over politeness1'

Another misinterpretation of Bourdieu's work is found in the notion of "a struggle over the representation of reality". Eelen (2001) used this phrase in Bourdieu's work to point out that "the same stretch of behaviour is not always unanimously evaluated as polite or impolite".[122] Eelen reclaimed the simple reality that there is a dispute over first-order politeness, ignored in modern politeness theories, because of its focus on attempting to establish a scientific theory of politeness. It was a significant claim, which led subsequent postmodern researchers such as Watts (2003) and Mills (2003) to claim that politeness is fundamentally discursive in nature. However, the passage that Eelen used to back up his arguments does not support this.

Eelen is aware that conceptualization of politeness2 was needed to deal with politeness as a proper social science and that researchers of politeness studies had been preoccupied with scientific conceptualisation of politeness (politeness2).

> Since the aim of social science is to capture, understand and explain (aspects of) social reality, it seems self-evident that politeness2 should concern the scientific conceptualization of the social phenomenon of politeness in the form of a theory of politeness1. By means of such a theory we should be able to understand how politeness1 works, what its functionality is, what it 'does' for people and for society in general. (Eelen 2001:43).

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[122] Eelen revisited Ide et al.'s (1992) study of commonsense notions of 'politeness' among Japanese and Americans and highlighted that in this study, American informants disagreed amongst themselves as to the appropriateness of the evaluation of 'polite' in the majority of the situations and that the Japanese informants' judgements are unanimous in only 2 situations. Through this study, Eelen (2001:45) reminded us that "alternative interpretations coexist" and he argues that "a struggle over the representation of reality is taking place within politeness1".

Eelen (2001:44) argues "[a]lthough politenes2 should no doubt be *about* politeness1, the concepts developed in a theory of politeness should be able to *explain* the phenomena observed in politeness1. They should provide a view of politeness1 'at one remove', grasping the phenomenon in its totality, revealing its inner workings and its functionality." (Eelen 2001:44) Eelen, reminding us of the non-unanimous nature of politeness1 evaluation in actual situations, argues that such reality (i.e. that judgement is not always unanimous) must be incorporated into politeness2 (Eelen 2001:45-46).

Eelen uses the phrase 'struggle over representations of reality' (ibid. 45) or 'struggle over reality' (ibid.) or 'reality as a struggle' to refer to the non-unanimous or disputable nature of evaluation of politeness by ordinary people. Eelen claims that he has taken this notion from Bourdieu. Later researchers, for example, Watts (2003) used the phrase 'discursive struggle over politeness1' in his book *Politeness*, which describes the acknowledged fact that there are many disputed interpretations of politeness by lay people. I agree that the evaluation of what is polite or is not polite is always disputable. However, the phrase 'struggle over representation of reality' in Bourdieu's essay did not mean what Eelen thought it means. Let us look at the passages that Eelen cited.

Eelen (2001:37) claims that "classificatory politeness1 should not be regarded as a neutral or objective categorization of behaviour, but is intimately connected with (social) values." Quoting Bourdieu: "[…] practical classifications are always subordinated to practical functions and oriented toward the production of *social effect* (Bourdieu 1991:220)", Eelen claims that politeness1 is trying to achieve a social aim. Eelen (2001:44-45) then quotes another passage from the same essay in order to explain the 'struggle over the representation'.

> One can understand the particular form of struggle over classifications that is constituted by the struggle over the definition of 'region' or 'ethnic' identity only if one transcends the opposition that science, in order to break away from the preconceptions of spontaneous sociology, must first establish

> between representation and reality, and only if one includes in reality the representation of reality, or more precisely, the struggle over representations, in the sense of mental images, but also of social demonstrations whose aim it is to manipulate mental images (and even in the sense of delegations responsible for organizing the demonstrations that are necessary to modify mental representations. (Bourdieu 1991:221)

These quotations are from Bourdieu's essay entitled "Elements for a Critical Reflection on the Idea of Region" in *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991), in which he discusses the notion of region, more generally of 'ethnic group' or 'ethnicity' (which is a euphemism for 'race'). From the rather convoluted translation of this long passage, Eelen (2001:45) points out that the concept of ethnic/regional identity is part of the struggle over the representations of reality, by which Eelen means that there are many different disputable representations. Eelen interprets this passage as Bourdieu's warning that scientific study should fully acknowledge such disputed representations of reality. Eelen (2001:45) then applies this reasoning to politeness2 and argues that politeness2 should incorporate the non-unanimous or disputable nature of politeness1 evaluation.

However, what Bourdieu is discussing here, in my understanding, is an extension of his main arguments concerning *symbolic power*, *symbolic violence*, and *misrecognition* to the issue of identity and representation. Another quotation clearly shows this. By 'struggle over ethnic identity', Bourdieu (1991) means

> a particular case of different struggles over classification, struggle over the monopoly of the power to make people see and believe, to get them to know and to recognize, to impose the legitimate definitions of the divisions of the social world and, thereby, to *make and unmake groups*. What is at stake here is the power of imposing a vision of the social world through principles of di-vision which, when they are imposed on a whole group, establish meaning and a consensus about meaning, and in particular about the identity and unity of the group, which creates the reality of the unity and the identity of the group. (1991:221)

When scientific discourse is dragged into the very struggle over classification, it inevitably uses such *symbolic power*. Bourdieu claims that the weapons used in

scientific discourse are 'objective' criteria.

> ...in symbolic struggles over cognition and recognition, so-called 'objective' criteria, the very ones which are well known to scientists, are used as weapons: they designate the characteristics on which a symbolic action of mobilization can be based in order to produce real unity or the belief in unity...which ultimately, and in particular via the actions of impositions and inculcation of legitimate identity (such as those actions performed by the school or the army), tends to generate real unity. (Bourdieu 1991:225-6)

Thus through 'struggles over classification', Bourdieu was not saying that there are many disputed interpretations by lay people. Rather Bourdieu is declaring that what is at stake here is the *symbolic power* of scientific discourse which governs the sacred frontiers or exercises quasi-divine power over the vision of the world (Bourdieu 1991:227-8). Then Bourdieu's focus here is not on lay members' various choices of classification as Eelen claims, but on *symbolic violence* which makes the dominant view legitimate and makes lay members *misrecognise* it as natural in the name of scientific discourse using 'objective' criteria as weapons. If I apply Bourdieu's argument here to the politeness discussion, the passage shows that what scientific discourse defines as politeness (politeness2) is nothing but what is determined and legitimised as being *polite* by the dominant group through its exercise of *symbolic violence*.

This misuse of the phrase 'struggle over reality' by Eelen has had some serious effects. Watts (2003) and Mills (2003) built their models based on this "discursive struggle over politeness1, i.e. over the ways in which (im)polite behaviour is evaluated and commented on by lay members" (Watts 2003:9) and they also associated the 'discursive struggle' with Bourdieu. For these three theorists, this discursive struggle over politeness1 is the central argument supporting their new approach to politeness. Here I am not disagreeing with the reality of the 'discursive struggle over politeness1' that Eelen (2001) pointed out. In fact, I also believe that the participants' own perceptions of politeness (politeness 1) and the disputable nature of politeness should be

emphasised in any alternative approach to politeness. I am only pointing out that unfortunately Bourdieu did not actually discuss this in his essay on identity and representation (Bourdieu 1991:220-228) as Eelen was arguing. Yet, subsequent researchers followed Eelen and continued to quote Bourdieu as their source for 'discursive struggle over politeness', when Bourdieu was discussing a quite different issue, namely, *symbolic power* in this essay.

5.2. Watts's (2003) appropriation of Bourdieu

Watts, who initially made the distinction between first order politeness (politeness1) and second order politeness (politeness2) (Watts, et al. 1992:3), inspired by Eelen (2001), argues in his 2003 book *Politeness* that "[a] theory of s*econd-order (im)politeness* or *(im)politeness*2 does not take adequate account of the evaluative moment in real verbal interactions, when participants display their awareness of salient social behaviour, which they may or may not designate as 'impolite' or 'polite'" (Watts 2003:24). After three decades of searching for a scientific conceptualisation of politeness and endeavouring to establish a universal theory of politeness, Watts now declares that "the 'real' object of study is politeness1 (first-order politeness), which means that it will not be possible to define a universal scientific concept of (im)politeness which can be applied…to all human societies" (ibid.). Watts, extending Eelen's (2001) interpretation of Bourdieu's 'struggle over representation', calls it the "discursive struggle over politeness1 (Watts 2003:9) and stresses the necessity of taking both speaker and the hearer adequately into consideration (Watts 2003:23).

In **(a).**, I will briefly introduce Watts's new politeness model, which is called 'social model of (im)politeness' and then in **(b).**, I will evaluate his treatment of Bourdieu in his model.

(a) Watts' social model of (im)politeness

Watts developed his 'social model of politeness' out of three sources: 1) inspiration from Werkhofer's analogy between 'politeness' and 'money'[123], 2) Bourdieu's 'theory of practice' and 3) Watts' own notions of 'emergent network' and 'latent network'. Watts first explains Bourdieu's key notions, i.e. *habitus*, *field*, *capital*, *doxa* and *symbolic power*, and then turns to Werkhofer's comparison of politeness with money. In Watts's social model of politeness, Werkhofer's analogy of politeness as *money* are used as the notion compatible with Bourdieu's sociology. Watts brings in economic terms such as *market* or *capital* from Bourdieu's sociology to explain terms *value*, *exchange*, *currency* and *conversion* from Werkhofer's comparison with money. Watts (2003:151) suggests that "the exchange of goods between individuals or groups has always been predicted on roughly equivalent *values* placed by each individual or each group on the goods received and given. A surrogate good, i.e. money is assumed to represent symbolically the value of one part of the exchange, which can be exchanged with goods that might represent a higher value. The surrogate good or money can be called *currency*. One form of *currency* can be converted into another in a different market. 'Linguistic politeness' is a surrogate good, thus can be seen as *currency*. (ibid.)

Watts (2003:151-2) claims that in order to acquire *linguistic capital* different resources are necessary such as language varieties (e.g dialect, sociolect, regional standard, national standard), skilled use of various communicative media (e.g. handwriting, typewriting, computer literacy, forms of oral media such as face-to-face

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[123] Werkhofer compares linguistic politeness to money. Politeness is, like money, a mediating force between individuals. Due to its social and historical constitution, this medium carries certain functions and during the course of history, it turns into power. Though socially constructed, politeness may motivate and structure courses of action, feeding into social processes. In this sense politeness is 'standing between' or 'mediating' between the individual and society. For details see Werkhofer 2005 [1992]:190. Werkhofer lists Georg Simmel's *Philosophy of Money* (1900) and Polanyi's 'market economy' as the inspiration behind his analogy of' 'money'. He makes no reference to Bourdieu's sociology.

interaction, telephone communication etc.). These resources help people to function over a range of communicative genres and discourse activity types. He argues that "acquiring the habitus to function optimally in a social field and to manipulate forms of capital in different marketplaces entails the development of an understanding of *politic behaviour*, including linguistic behaviour, appropriate to an ongoing social interaction in which the individual is involved [emphasis added]" (Watts 2003:152).

The third source Watts uses for his social model of politeness is his own concept of 'emergent network' and 'latent network'. Watts (2003:154) claims that the socio-communicative verbal interaction entails establishment, reestablishment and reproduction of social links between the interactants, which emerge during the interaction. Watts calls these networks of social links *emergent networks*. Watts (2003:154) argues that "as participants in social interaction, we can directly experience the construction of emergent networks and can effect the ways in which they are constructed." He claims that researchers "can observe how the network has emerged in social interaction and relate them to the social network that has already been constructed as part of …the objectified structures and mode of behaviour which individuals have gained through previous interaction" (ibid.).[124] These social networks as objectified structures are called *latent networks* (Watts 2003:154). Watts calls unmarked appropriate behaviour, i.e. behaviour which is in a state of equilibrium, 'politic behaviour'. Watts (2003) incorporates 'politic behaviour' and Bourdieu's *habitus* into his own 'emergent network' and 'latent network'.

> Part of the habitus of an individual will be knowledge of the latent networks in which s/he functions (or could potentially) function). The mode of functioning in those networks is equivalent to the politic behaviour characterising an interaction in a specific social field whenever the latent network is reactivated in new emergent network. Clearly, an

[124] Watts's theory of emergent network is still not complete. Watts (2003:155) writes that he still needs to resolve the issue of when an emergent network can be said to be terminated, i.e. what is its duration.

> individual's habitus is built on the basis of the reciprocal construction of politic behaviour in all members of the network. I shall argue that there is always a tendency to construct the politic behaviour of social interaction in latent network as being in the state of *equilibrium*. The notion of equilibrium is …an idealised state that it is necessary for an individual to adopt as part of her/his habitus. (Watts 2003:155)

Watts interprets Bourdieu's *habitus* in terms of his notion of 'politic behaviour': "an individual's *habitus* is built on the basis of the reciprocal construction of politic behaviour in all members of the network" (ibid.). He argues that there is always a tendency to construct 'politic' behaviour in the latent network. (For further details of Watts's model, see Appendix 4-A).

(b) Evaluation of Watts's treatment of Bourdieu

Following Eelen (2003), Watts has made a great contribution through his attempt to construct an alternative approach to politeness. In this section, I want to acknowledge his contribution but at the same time highlight those places where I do not entirely agree with Watts in his approach, especially in relation to his treatment of Bourdieu. Having been inspired by Eelen (2001), who emphasized that politeness evaluation is ultimately open to dispute, Watts (2003) no longer aimed to "describe and/or explain *what* types of human social behaviour are polite" (Watts 2003:160). Instead, in his model, Watts (2003:160, 162) aims to account for *when* and *why* individual users of language classify some utterances as 'polite' and others as 'impolite'. He also aims to account for "the effects of any structure open to interpretation as 'polite' on the social equilibrium of the interaction" (2003:162). With a "postmodernist discursive focus on linguistics" (Watts 2005:xiv), Watts argues that "a serious consideration of lay persons' evaluations of polite behaviour" (ibid) is necessary in his alternative approach to politeness. As mentioned earlier, Watts constructed his 'social model of politeness' (2003) or his model of 'relational work' (2005) using 1) inspiration from Werkhofer's analogy of 'money',

2) Bourdieu's 'theory of practice' and 3) Watts' own notions of 'emergent network' and 'latent network'.

Particular treatments of Bourdieu, which do not seem exactly to reflect Bourdieu's original ideas may have their origin in Eelen's (2003) interpretation of Bourdieu. Following Eelen's interpretation of the phrase 'struggle over reality' as 'struggle over politeness1 evaluation', Watts (2003) developed the notion of "discursive struggle over politeness1, i.e. regarding the ways in which (im)polite behaviour is evaluated and commented on by lay members" (Watts 2003:9). Watts made the endeavour of accounting for this 'discursive struggle over politeness1' the project for his postmodernist politeness studies. Earlier in this chapter (See 5.1.(b)) I pointed out that Eelen (2001) seems to assume more freedom of human agency (social actor) than Bourdieu. I perceive a similar tendency in Watts' understanding of Bourdieu, too. Watts writes: "Bourdieu's theory of practice suggests that what is interpretable as (im)polite depends on the linguistic habitus of the individual and the linguistic capital that s/he manipulates" (2003:160). Watts sees 'habitus' as a "predisposition to act in specific ways in specific situations" (Watts 2005:xlii, Locher & Watts 2005:11). Watts (2003:162, 215) argues that the evaluation of certain utterances as polite or impolite is linked to the exercise of power in emergent social networks. Watts (2003:216) claims that power is negotiated among participants in emergent networks and that the linguistic expression of politeness is intricately tied up with the exercise of power. This interpretation of power resembles the 'interactionists' who tend to reduce relations of power to relations of communication as discussed in 3.1.(c) in this chapter.

Bourdieu also discusses *power* but for Bourdieu, *power* is not something which can be negotiated in emergent networks, as Watts claims. For Bourdieu, *power* is the historical product of a long-term struggle. Parker (2000:46) describes it as the "historical

products of long processes of struggle in which the dominant have consolidated their hold of advantage and instituted mechanism…of 'symbolic violence'". Parker explains this further.

> The historical process has been long enough for the dominated and the dominant to have developed their respective cultures, which contain the accumulated expectations, presumptions, techniques and defences which have been found to work for them. The dominant have learned how to maintain their advantage and the dominated have learned how to defend the little they have in the way of possessions and self-respect. Where the exercise of power has become naturalized and routinized in symbolic form, with its characteristic 'euphemization', Bourdieu's picture of habitus as durable, transposable and overwhelmingly reproductive in its effects is at its most plausible. (Parker 2000:46)

Through the habitus, the practical sense, 'feel for the game', social actors' behaviours and utterances are self-censored and euphemized so that they may be matched to market conditions. Bourdieu claims that 'politeness' consists in this art of taking account of the relative positions of speaker and hearer and market conditions, if necessary, by means of *euphemization* (Bourdieu 1991:80) (See 3.2.(c)., this chapter). Thus Bourdieu also discusses the connection between 'politeness' and 'power' but rather differently from Watts. Through the act of censorship and euphemization, social actors are caught up in symbolic power. Bourdieu explains the nature of *symbolic power* as follows:

> Symbolic power – a power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world and, thereby, action on the world and thus the world itself, an almost magical power which enables one to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force (whether physical or economic), by virtue of the specific effect of mobilization – is a power that can be exercised only if it is *recognized*, that is misrecognized as arbitrary. (Bourdieu 1991:170)

In this passage, Bourdieu (1991:170) claims that *symbolic power* is "a power that can be exercised only if it is *recognised*". According to Bourdieu, through the *habitus*, we are inculcated into accepting the reality of the world, advantageously to the dominant, as

'the given' or what we feel to be our 'second nature'. Bourdieu used *doxa* to explain this: *habitus* is a felt reality, and is outside the realm of opinion or universe of argument (See 2.5.(a)., this chapter). Watts (2003) claims that individuals are able to exercise or negotiate power in emergent social networks, whereas Bourdieu (1991) claims that individuals are predisposed to censor their own utterance through *habitus* and to reproduce the structure in which the dominant maintain their advantage. This difference may also come from a greater freedom of agency in relation to structure than Watts assumed.

Watts (2003:160) writes: "Bourdieu's theory of practice suggests that what is interpretable as (im)polite depends on the linguistic *habitus* of the individual and the linguistic capital that s/he is able to manipulate". Bourdieu argues that people who have experienced similar socialisation tend to internalise a similar social structure, thus it results in having similar *habitus*, 'the sense of perception, appreciation and action'. In *Distinction* (1984a) Bourdieu explains the *class habitus* – how people in a similar social class tend to develop similar tastes, sense of perception and appreciation. For the same reason, if two individuals have a very different primary socialisation, their respective habitus, which is 'the sense of perception and appreciation and action' will also be very different. Depending upon their respective social position, people from the same broader society may have very different socialisations. We are familiar with Shaw's play *Pygmalion* (1913) or *My Fair Lady* (1964), a subsequent film based on *Pygmalion,* in which Professor Henry Higgins, made a bet with his friend to transform a Cockney flower girl, Eliza Doolittle, into a refined society lady by teaching her how to speak with an upper class accent and by training her in upper class etiquette. By training her linguistic skills and social manners to match the upper class, Professor Higgens tried to give her cultural capital (which includes linguistic capital) that she needed to survive in

upper class circles. Obviously Eliza's natural behaviour before her training would have been judged as entirely 'inappropriate' in upper class society due to their difference in *habitus*.

Watts (2003) sees 'politic behaviour' as being in a state of equilibrium: "Clearly, an individual's *habitus* is built on the basis of the reciprocal construction of politic behaviour in all members of the network....The notion of equilibrium is...an idealised state that it is necessary for an individual to adopt as part of her/his *habitus*" (Watts 2003:155.). However, according to Bourdieu, *habitus* tends to vary depending on their past socialisation and capital which the social actors have in the specific field, and what is perceived to be appropriate tends to vary. Then the notion of *equilibrium* or 'idealised state' that Watts (2003) used may not be an appropriate term. I would rather see Bourdieu's *habitus* as the particular *arbitrary sense* that we have acquired through socialisation and that we all carry along as our dispositions. Though it is arbitrary, because we experience it as our second nature, we misrecognise that 'our' practical sense or sense of perception/judgement is legitimate. When two different *habitus-es* clash, the dominant person's *habitus* may be considered as being legitimate and there is the balance of power in the hegemonic reality that the dominant's view is seen as being legitimate and to which the dominated gives consent. If there is *equilibrium* in Bourdieu's theory of practice, I argue that it must be this peculiar balance of power between the dominant and the dominated, which itself is *symbolic violence*.

Watts employed Bourdieu's *habitus* in his new approach to politeness. However, Watts, like Eelen, assumed more freedom of human agency that Bourdieu actually did in his interpretation of *habitus*. His understanding of power is also different from Bourdieu. While Bourdieu stressed symbolic power, Watts saw power as something that can be negotiated in emergent network. This second point may be also attributed to more active

agency role that Watts assumed.

5.3. Mills's (2003) appropriation of Bourdieu

Sara Mills has written extensively on 'feminism and linguistics', and 'feminism and post-colonial theory'. She draws her arguments from various thinkers and social theorists, particularly Michel Foucault. She is also a prolific writer in the field of politeness and a leading member of the Linguistic Politeness Research Group. *Gender and Politeness* (2003) is one of her recent works (2002, 2003, 2004) which deal with issues such as 'gender and politeness' and 'class and politeness'. Mills (2003:2-3) classifies herself as a Third Wave feminist linguist, who, being critical of Second Wave linguistics which focused on 'women's language' as a homogeneous entity, takes an anti-essentialist viewpoint. Thus in *Gender and Politeness*, she does not simply generalise and assume that males and females speak differently but aims to produce a more context-based model of gender, where gender construction is constrained by its negotiations with suppositions of community rules and stereotypes of what is regarded as appropriate.

In **(a).**, I will first introduce Mills' approach to politeness and then in **(b).** I will evaluate her treatment of Bourdieu in her approach.

(a). Mills's approach to politeness

Mills uncovered various problems in modern politeness theories particularly in B&L's theory before she spelled out her own approach. For instance, Mills criticises B&L's theory's assumption that speakers have clear intentions which can be unproblematically decoded by the hearer. (2003:90) She also questions B&L's use of practical rationality/cost benefit analysis (2003:92-93), though she has not specifically identified their underlying sociological theory, that is, 'rational action theory' as I have done in

this thesis. Mills also challenges various misleading assumptions about social variables in B&L's theory, i.e. these social variables are manifest to all participants and equally salient to all (2003:102); such power relations and social distance are stable throughout conversation (2003:101); these social variables are simplistic ignoring many other factors (2003:103). Mills then argues that "a large part of politeness is judged by speakers to be necessary because of social constraints or ideologies/discourses which speakers have internalised as their own values, but which in fact are those hypothesised of the dominant group" (2003:91). This has considerable resemblance to Bourdieu's *habitus*. In fact, in *Gender and Politeness*, Mills draws upon Bourdieu's *habitus* in conjunction with Wenger's (1998) 'Community of Practice (CoP)' [125], but, as she claims, both in critically modified forms.

Wenger (1998:6) claims that "we all belong to communities of practice. At home, at work, at school, in our hobbies – we belong to several communities of practice at any given time." CoP was initially presented as a social theory of learning[126] but as Barton and Tusting (2005:3) point out, CoP "has had an immediate appeal and perceived usefulness across a range of situations" and has been used in many disciplines in various ways. They find the original concept of CoP as described by Wenger slippery and elusive and difficult to pin down. (2005:6)[127] Wenger's (1998) CoP has been influential in feminist linguistics since Eckert & McConnell's papers in 1992, 1998,

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[125]Originally developed by Lave & Wenger in 1991 as a central idea in situated approaches to learning. "The starting point for the idea of a community of practice is that people typically come together in groupings to carry out activities in everyday life, in the workplace and in education. Such groupings can be seen as distinct from the formal structures of these domains. (Barton and Tusting 2005:1-2)" These groups are characterised by three aspects; *mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire. Participation* in communities of practice becomes the fundamental process of learning (*Situated learning*). (Wenger 1998:73)

[126] Wenger claims that "learning is an integral part of our daily lives (1998:8)." and "it is part of our participation in our communities and organisation" (ibid.).

[127] Lave and Wenger (1991) used *legitimate peripheral participation* by which they "wanted to broaden the traditional connotation of the concept of apprenticeship – from a master/student or mentor/mentee relationship to one of changing participation and identity transformation in a community of practice" (Wenger 1998:11)". Wenger (1998) later described CoPs in terms of the interplay of four fundamental dualities - participation vs. reification, designed vs. emergent, identification vs. negotiability and local vs. global.

1999 (cf. 2003). However, Mills (2003:3) argues that even "Eckert & McConnell's 'modified' notion of CoP is insufficient to describe the complex negotiations between individual speakers and the various linguistic communities of which they are members, simply because that model views that interaction as governed largely by constraints". Mills is concerned with "the negotiation that takes place between individual speakers and their community of practice and the wider society" (2003:3) and believes that Bourdieu's *habitus*, particularly as modified by Eelen (2001) is useful in capturing this. Mills explicitly claims that she is using Bourdieu's *habitus* as modified by Eelen (2001). In the next section, I will evaluate how she interpreted and appropriated Bourdieu in her new approach to politeness.

(b). Evaluation of Mills's treatment of Bourdieu

Mills (2003:36) interprets Bourdieu's *habitus* as "a flexible system of behaviours which, when engaged with by individuals, perform a structuring role without being 'invented' by a single agent or institution". Mills (2001:36), quoting Eelen, interprets that the present range of linguistic behaviour of individuals is based on the "creative transformation of present conditions from a position based in past experience" (Eelen 2001:222). Like Eelen (2001) and Watts, Mills also seems to allow more freedom to agency, but, in her case she explicitly states that she deliberately chose the modified version of Bourdieu suggested by feminist linguists. Mills (2003:54 in endnotes) reveals that feminists working with Bourdieu's model of language were not happy with his fairly passive representation of the speaker. Mills also notes that Bucholtz (1999:205) recognises that Bourdieu sees language practices as 'primarily reproducing existing social arrangements' and proposes a modified version of Bourdieu's work which stresses the role of individuals as agents in constructing their own sense of identity in relation to particular communities of practice.

Interestingly, Wenger, who originally proposed the notion of CoP, is also not happy with the limited role of agency in Bourdieu's sociology. Wenger acknowledges Bourdieu as a prominent theorist, but does not directly draw his ideas from Bourdieu (1998:281-2).

> Bourdieu...argues that practices are generated from an underlying structure, which he calls *habitus*. In my argument, the habitus would be an emerging property of interacting practices rather than their generative infra-structure, with an existence unto itself. This position is closer to Giddens's notion of structuration..., but with practices as specific contexts for the knowledgeability of actors. (Wenger 1998:289)

Wenger also modifies *habitus* and gives it a more active role of agency. He claims that this position is closer to Giddens in his 'structuration theory'[128]. It seems that not only Eelen, and Watts but also Mills, Bucholtz and Wenger all allowed more active agency role in their frameworks than Bourdieu himself claimed in his theory of practice. However, altering Bourdieu's sociology by allowing more freedom to agency would have damaging consequence upon Bourdieu's theory of practice. I will discuss this in section 6, in which I will also contrast the two different ways in which Giddens and Bourdieu attempted to resolve structure/agency.

There are other texts which indicate that Mills' version of *habitus* differs from Bourdieu's original notion. Mills discusses Bourdieu's *habitus* in relation to 'community of practice' as follows:

> Drawing on Bourdieu's (1991) notion of habitus, I argue that this sense of appropriateness is one which varies slightly from speaker to speaker; so that rather than appropriateness being imposed by society, or by the speech community of practice or class or even by the context, appropriateness is something which each individual has to *work out*, by assessing their own status in relation to other participants in the community of practice, and by assessing what they think the context demands. This means they constantly have to assess their own position and identity/role within the group in order to evaluate what is appropriate for them and others, and to assess whether they are going to abide by these rules or flout them (Mills 2003:71). [emphasis

[128] For further explanation on Gidden's structuration theory, see Appendix 4-B.

added]

Mills, in the above description, suggests that each individual has to 'work out' appropriateness by taking into consideration his/her position in relation to others in the CoP and the demand of the context. This shows the differences between Mills and Bourdieu. Again it seems that these differences arise from the way in which they view the role of agency in both frameworks. The phrase 'work out' in the above description seems to imply that there is some conscious evaluating process and also some mindful action based on evaluation involved. But as we have seen, Bourdieu sees particular practices as the product of a dialectical encounter between an individual's *habitus* and a particular *field.* In his view, individuals are already predisposed to act in a certain way as *field* requires because they had been inculcated to do so through their socialisation. *Habitus* in Bourdieu's sense refers to an embodied sensibility. So the censorship or euphemisation through *habitus* that Bourdieu discusses is not so much a cognitive judgement that an individual makes on the spot as the 'feel for the game' that has been inculcated as *bodily hexis* through past socialisation. Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* has embedded historicity , which generates practice. This means that actual practice also has historicity embedded within it. Blommaert (2005b:127) described it as being "long history condensed in single human activities". Bourdieu claims that "[t]he relation to body is a fundamental dimension of the *habitus*" (Bourdieu 1990b:72) (See 2.2.(d), this chapter). *Habitus*, as 'a feel for the game', self-censors production and generates utterance matched to the market conditions. This 'bodily' element of *habitus* is absent from Mills's discussion of *habitus.*[129]

Having adopted both 'communities of practice' (CoP) and *habitus*, Mills seems to run into another problem. CoP seems to be a convenient notion because it enables her

[129] This was also the case in Eelen's work (See 5.1. (a)., this chapter)

to avoid essentialism and accommodate different norms, appropriateness, and power relations by dealing with them in different communities of practice.

> The notion of community of practice can provide a framework for analysing the complexity of judging the utterance as polite or impolite, and by analysing individual assessments of stereotypes we can see that within different communities of practice individuals may perform their gendered, raced and classed identities in different ways. (Mills 2003:159)

Mills, using CoP, claims that "[p]oliteness should be seen as a set of strategies or verbal habits which interlocutors set as a norm for themselves or which others judge as the norm for them, as well as being perceived as a socially constructed norm within a particular community of practice" (2003:109). Mills writes that "Bourdieu argues that speakers act as if there were linguistic and behavioural norms circulating within society" (2003:36). This may be a problematic interpretation of Bourdieu, because Bourdieu's theory of practice begins with the rejection of structuralism, which primarily discusses society in terms of societal norms and rules. Mills disagrees with society-based norms but argues for community-of-practice based norms instead (2003:3, 9, 109, 135, 159) and she assumes that negotiation takes place for such norms. Mills hybridizes *habitus* and CoP and reintroduces the notion of norms as community-of-practice based norms. Bourdieu's h*abitus* generates regulated improvisation, but not as a result of conscious rule-following. Mills's interpretation does not leave room for such improvisation. Furthermore, Mills seems to single out the notion of *habitus* and does not incorporate the notion of 'field' or 'capital' into her arguments.[130] As I have shown, practice, as a dialectical encounter of *habitus* and *field* and how capital is related to it, is fundamental to Bourdieu's theory of practice. 'Community of practice' in Mills's framework seems to be a replacement for Bourdieu's 'field'.

Mills employed a modified Bourdieu's *habitus* allowing more freedom to

[130] Mills (2003) did mention 'cultural capital' on a few occasions where 'class' was discussed (See 2003:47, 235-6).

agency with Wenger's CoP. By reintroducing community-of-practice based norms, Bourdieu's *habitus* lost the 'embodied' element which allows regulated improvisation. Bourdieu's *habitus* needs the notion of field to explain practice and that was also lost.

5.4. The Modification, alteration, and hybridization of Bourdieu's theory of practice

Eelen (2001), Mills (2003) and Watts (2003) all received inspiration from Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, for explaining 'production' as being both regulated by structure while at the same time allowing creativity to individuals. However, they modified, altered his original notion of *habitus* or sometimes hybridised it with other notions for their new approaches to politeness. Modification or alteration of the notion of *habitus* has resulted in misinterpretation of some aspects of Bourdieu's theory of practice. In this section, I will discuss some of the consequences which arise from doing so.

Eelen's (2001) interpretation of Bourdieu's habitus which allows a more active role to agency was followed by Watts (2003). Mills (2003), Bucholtz (1999) and Wenger (1998) all intentionally reinterpreted *habitus* allowing more freedom to agency. This modification has serious consequences. If Bourdieu's sociology is altered to something close to agency-centred sociology as researchers such as Eelen, Watts, Mills, Bucholtz and Wenger have proposed, the backbone of Bourdieu's theoretical framework which encapsulates both 'structure' and 'agency' will be lost, which I believe, is *symbolic power* (See 2.5.(b)., this chapter). Bourdieu suggests that our own practices obscure the legitimating aspect of power, which justifies inequality. Through our *habitus*, we believe or misrecognise that this is the normal way of the world and perpetuate structures from the past into the future. There is no coercion but there is hegemony, i.e. *symbolic power* if we use Bourdieu's term. I contend that *symbolic power* exists at the very heart of politeness practice, too. Our own production or

utterances are to some extent always self-censored and euphemised through *habitus* in favour of the dominant. We misrecognise and accept the hegemonic reality through *habitus*, embodied sensibility. Watts's (2003:216) understanding of power as being negotiable among participants in emergent networks may be one result of more freedom given to agency. In Watts's view, evaluation of politeness has to do with power negotiation in emergent networks, whereas what Bourdieu (1991) discusses is *symbolic power*, the hegemonic reality that people do not recognise and accept as normal, which cannot be simply negotiated during social interaction. For Bourdieu, power is the product of long historical processes of struggle in which the dominant have consolidated their hold, and their advantage has been legitimised. (See 5.2.(b)., this chapter). Parker (2000:39) describes Bourdieu's project as 'structuration through power'. Looking from the other angle, it is this emphasis of power in his Bourdieu's project which made agency less powerful. Then the limited role of agency in Bourdieu's theory of practice can be seen as a weakness, which I will discuss in the next section.

I contend that Eelen (2001), Watts (2003) and Mills (2003) engaged in modification, hybridization and alteration of Bourdieu's theory of practice, because they had anticipated Bourdieu's theory of practice providing more than it was able to do for their projects. As Terkourafi (2005:237) pointed out, Eelen (2001), Watts (2003) and Mills (2003) all shifted their emphases from establishing a universal theory of politeness to the participants' own perceptions of politeness (politeness1). Eelen's misinterpretion of the 'struggle over representations' in Bourdieu's essay was used as the source of inspiration for Eelen, Watts and Mills to focus on 'struggle over politeness1' in their postmodern approach to politeness. Perhaps they needed some constructs to explain how individuals make various different judgements about politeness in terms of their own production and assessment of others' utterances.

Bourdieu's *habitus* explains the genesis of production. However, the actual process of how practice is generated is hardly discussed at all in Bourdieu's theory of practice. Bourdieu hardly discussed the Hearer's evaluative practice. (See further discussion in the Conclusion chapter). Eelen (2001), Mills (2003) and Watts (2003), who aimed to elucidate this process, stretched Bourdieu's theory of practice in order that they might be able to elucidate this process.

6. Weaknesses of Bourdieu's theory of practice

Despite the great contribution that Bourdieu's theory of practice provided towards an alternative approach to politeness, Bourdieu is unable to provide all the answers to all our problems. Postmodern politeness researchers modified and altered Bourdieu's theoretical concepts and hybridised them with other notions perhaps partly for the theorists' own convenience and partly in order to cover up some weaknesses in Bourdieu's sociology. I have shown in the previous section (5.4.) that such ventures resulted in losing the crux of Bourdieu's theory of practice. Thus I would rather acknowledge the limitations of Bourdieu's framework for my exploration of alternative approaches to politeness, rather than alter Bourdieu's original theoretical concepts. In this section, I will point out these weaknesses of Bourdieu's theory of practice in relation to understanding politeness.

The first weakness is the limited role of agency in Bourdieu's theory of practice. That is why postmodern researchers, Eelen (2001), Watts (2003) and Mills (2003) altered Bourdieu's original notion of *habitus* and allowed more freedom to human agency. It is not only Bourdieu who made the structure/agency problem the main focus of the project. Giddens also tried to resolve this problem through his 'structuration theory' (See Appendix 4-B for further discussion of structuration theory). Parker

(2000:52) called Gidden's project 'structuration through knowledgeable persons as opposed to Bourdieu's project, which he called 'structuration through power' (ibid. 39) (See 5.4., this chapter). Even in their project of encapsulating both structure and agency, I observe some remaining tendencies toward either structure or agency: Giddens's structuration seems to be inclined toward agency through his focus on social actor's knowledgability whereas Bourdieu's theory of practice seems to be inclined toward structuralism as he tries to explain production and reproduction of structure through *habitus.* Bourdieu's focus on reproduction of social structure resulted in a limited role for agency. Bourdieu's approach might appeal especially to non-Anglo-Saxon researchers, because structural constraints on individuals are more salient in the collectivistic tendencies in their society. Personally, having come from East Asia, I can intuitively empathise (and resonate) with Bourdieu's position. However, if instead I had had my primary socialization in an individualistic society, I might have been very dissatisfied with the limited role given to human agency, just as Eelen (2001) and Mills (2003) have allowed human agency more freedom. *Modernist* theoretical positions presupposed an unbiased neutral position of the researcher, based on Descartes's assumption that the thinking being (*res cogitans*) can have dispassionate knowledge about the world (*res extensa)* without being influenced (cf. *Ch.3* 1.1.). However, in reality, as long as we are all the product of socialisation, we inevitably tend to have biases, which I consider positively as 'perspectives'. I believe that in any 'postmodern' academic discipline, in which the Cartesian assumption is questioned, this should be taken seriously. I will come back to this issue in the Conclusion chapter. Parker (2000:105) points out that in Bourdieu's sociology, "[p]osition and dispositions are so tightly combined that the person and the social self become indistinguishable. Persons pursue objectively structured collective interests informed by their habitus in a highly

predictable and predominantly reproductive fashion. This limits the scope for innovation or acting against type." Thus in Bourdieu's framework, there is not much freedom for agency, and no personality or emotion expressed in such models of agency.

Second, Bourdieu's theory of practice is good at explaining the production and reproduction of structures through actions, but it fails to explain the changeability or transformation of structure adequately. (See Appendix 4-B) Practice generated through *habitus*, "systems of durable, transportable dispositions" (Bourdieu 1990b:53), which are matched to the demand of the market, are produced and reproduced. The *habitus* is "a product of history and it produces – more history – in accordance with the scheme generated by history" (1990b:54). Bourdieu's sociology has been called 'genetic structuralism' (Calhoun 2000:708). I observe some weaknesses of structuralism still in Bourdieu's theory of practice. Calhoun (1995:142) commented that "Bourdieu's theory is at its best…as a theory of reproduction, and at its weakest as a theory of transformation". (See 5.1.(a)) Structuralism is weak in explaining changes or transformation.

Third, as Bourdieu's interest is the genesis of practice, or the mode of generation of practices, his focus is on the Speaker's self-censorship in his linguistic production. Bourdieu does not explicitly discuss the Hearer's evaluative practice. However, in *Reproduction: In Education, Society and Culture* (1977c) Bourdieu defines *habitus* as "system of schemes of thought, perception, appreciation and action" (1977c: 40) and in *Distinction* (1984a), Bourdieu makes an association between *habitus* and taste. It implies *habitus* can possibly be interpreted as the basis for the Hearer's evaluative practices, though it was not his primary focus. However, the question remains: can Bourdieu's *habitus* sufficiently explain the Hearer's evaluative practices? This issue will be taken up in the Conclusion chapter.

Finally, Bourdieu's field, market and capital tend to view human beings as an achievement of social/economic success. Humans in Bourdieu's theory of practice seem to be economically motivated and being concerned with increasing their capital or converting one capital to another kind of capital. *Habitus* also provides individuals with class-dependent, predisposed ways of relating to and categorising both familiar and novel situations (Shilling 2003:113). Explaining human motivation for their behaviour in terms of class, capital and market seems to be economic reductionism. It may be difficult to explain various aspects of social interaction including politeness by discussing human beings in such terms.

7. Conclusion

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, I turned to Bourdieu seeking some resolution to the dilemma of structure and agency in our politeness theories, namely the dilemma of the structure-centred approach (Lakoff and Leech) and the agency-centred approach (Brown & Levinson). This is because Bourdieu makes these very problems his main theoretical concern and his solution emerged as his theory of practice. Bourdieu's theory of practice was not only capable of resolving these problems but also provided many advantageous understandings.

Bourdieu provided some resolution to the structure/agency dilemma and other dualisms such as theory/practice and mind/body dualisms. Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* as *bodily hexis* is significant because it indicates that practice is not necessarily always led by the mind's cognitive activity. Bourdieu's view of practice as a dialectic encounter between *habitus* and *field* provided ways of accounting for a diverse 'sense of appropriateness' resulting from encounters between different *habitus*, *field* and different positions in the field. Accommodating a heterogeneous sense of appropriateness,

Bourdieu's theory of practice is not caught up in rational universal principles like other modernist thinkers. Bourdieu also revealed that asymmetry of power exists in linguistic practice. He recognised that legitimate and appropriate practice is determined by the practice of those who are dominant. Thus what is considered as universally accepted politeness is a product of reproduction of structure, which is advantageous to the dominant. Yet individuals are inculcated to believe in this reality without questioning it, which Bourdieu calls *symbolic power.* Bourdieu incorporated 'time' into his 'theory of practice' through the notion of *habitus*. Habitus, a feel for the game or practical sense acquired through socialisation is an embodied history, "past which survives in the present perpetuate itself into the future" (Bourdieu 1977:82). Lakoff, Leech, and Brown & Levinson could not incorporate time into their understanding of politeness partly because they were constrained by the modernist approach which aimed to establish a timeless, universal principle. Bringing a historical perspective into the understanding of politeness is a great advantage.[131]

It is important to recognise that Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* is not meant to be a scientific construct created for a scientific model. After Bourdieu had difficulties in explaining what he observed in his ethnographic fieldwork through structuralist analysis, he needed an explanation to connect structure and social actors' practice.[132] A Japanese anthropologist Tanabe (2003:100-101, 118) described Bourdieu's *habitus* as a mysterious 'black box', which internalises structure and generates individual's practices matched to the market conditions, whereby structure is reproduced. Tanabe (2003:100-101) points out that it is still not clear how practice is generated through

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[131] I will discuss the issue of historicity further in the Conclusion chapter.

[132] Bourdieu states: "I wanted to account for practice in its humblest forms – rituals, matrimonial choices, the mundane economic activity of everyday life etc. – by escaping the objectivism of action understood as a mechanical reaction 'without an agent' and the subjectivism which portrays action as the deliberate pursuit of a conscious intention, the free project of a conscience pursuing its own ends and maximizing its utility through rational computation" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:121).

habitus and that it may be known from the effect or outcome of the practice. Michel de Certeau (1998 [1984]:58) sees Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* as an 'assumed reality' rather than an 'observed reality': Bourdieu was interested in "the mode of generation of practices" (de Certeau 1998:58) and he employed the notion of *habitus* as a 'hypothetical construct' or 'hypothetical metaphor' to explain the practical sense, which is improvised yet regulated, creative yet matched to the conditions in the field. Bourdieu himself declares that the concepts in his theory of practice are 'shorthand' within his research process (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:161) (See 2.1., this chapter). De Certeau (1998:58) also calls the notion of *habitus* a 'theoretical metaphor'. It is important to remember that Bourdieu was hesitant to call his theory of practice 'a theory' and presented it as a 'thinking tool'.

Despite many advantages, Bourdieu's theory of practice also has certain inevitable weaknesses. One of such weaknesses is the very limited role given to human agency. Another weakness is that Bourdieu's emphasis on class, capital, and market tend to focus on certain aspects of human beings within a social hierarchy. However, people in social interaction are far more complex than they are portrayed in Bourdieu's theory of practice. Bourdieu does not pay attention to the social psychological aspect of human interaction. For a fuller picture of agency to explain the complexity of politeness, Bourdieu's framework may be insufficient. As a second thinking tool, I will turn to Goffman who will provide us with a richer understanding of social interaction. I hope that Goffman's notion of self and his sociology of social interaction will compensate for the limitations identified in Bourdieu's framework.

Chapter 5 Goffman's Sociology: Self in Social Interaction and Interaction Order

0. Introduction

In **chapter 4**, in search of a solution to the problematic dichotomy of structure-centred and agency-centred approaches to politeness, I turned to Bourdieu, who proposed his theory of practice as a way of overcoming this structure/agency dichotomy. In his theory of practice, Bourdieu elucidated actual practice without being trapped in either objectivism or subjectivism. However, this was all achieved at the expense of minimising the focus on 'agency'. Farnell (2000:413) alleges that Bourdieu's theory of practice provides "an essentially ungrounded and mind-*less* notion of human action that is restricted to habituated practices" and claims that "although Bourdieu's theoretical resources allow him to include talk *about* the body, he is unable to include 'talk' *from* the body". The notion of agency in Bourdieu's theory is indeed limited: it is mainly associated with positions in particular fields[133]

In this chapter, I turn to Goffman's sociology as the second 'thinking tool'. Why turn to Goffman? Bourdieu's framework has a limited role for agency and was insufficient to provide an explanation of the complexity of politeness and little attention

[133] Interestingly, Bourdieu's notion of 'sense of place' (Bourdieu 1991:82) resembles Ide's (1989) notion of *wakimae* (discernment). Bourdieu speaks of a "fundamental dimension of the sense of knowing the place which one occupies in the social space" (Bourdieu 1991:82). Ide (1989:23) claims that "[t]o behave according to *wakimae* is to show verbally and non-verbally one's sense of place or role in a given situation according to social conventions (1989: 230)." In her view, individuals are expected to "acknowledge the delicate status and/or the role differences of the speaker, the addressee and the referent in communication (ibid.)" and "to behave according to the status and the role of various levels ascribed to or acquired by that individual (ibid.)" She claims that "to observe *wakimae* by means of language use is an integral part of linguistic politeness. (ibid.)" Ide (1988; 1989) argues that B&L's theory focused on *volitional* strategies of politeness and failed to acknowledge the aspect of *wakimae* (discernment). She seems to have recognised that B&L were 'agency-centred' and neglected the 'structure' aspects of politeness.

is given to the social psychological aspect of social interaction. On the other hand, Goffman elucidates face-to-face interaction by focusing on agency, i.e. the participants in interaction. The second reason for turning to Goffman is that Goffman's notion of 'face' has already been employed as a central notion in Brown & Levinson's theory, but as discussed in Chapter 2, Goffman's original notion of 'face' was altered into B&L's technical notion 'face-want' in order to fit in with the rational choice theory that they employed. As I will show in this chapter, Goffman's original notion of 'face' in the context of 'interaction ritual' is a much richer concept and it is vital to recover this 'ritual' aspect associated with Goffman's notion of face. Thirdly, besides 'ritual', Goffman used other metaphors, i.e. 'drama' and 'game' to elucidate the complex nature of social interaction. All three metaphors are virtually indispensable elements in exploring politeness. Gofman's unusual method of elucidating various dimensions of social interaction employing these three different metaphors in his sociology shows that he is not motivated by the *modernist* demand of 'rationality' and 'objectivity' (I will discuss this further in 1.2.4). Then Goffman's sociology seems to exemplify a possible alternative approach which goes beyond modernism.

Fourthly, Goffman also attempted to encapsulate both structure and agency in his sociology, even though he did not make it his main project as Bourdieu did. Goffman took a very different approach to ethnography than that of Bourdieu. While Bourdieu put the ethnographic data into a larger social panorama and explained how social structure is reproduced through *habitus* in an individual's practice, Goffman focused on face-to-face social interaction and engaged in the detailed study of interactional data. In other words, Bourdieu adopted a macro perspective while Goffman was concerned with micro level social interaction between individuals. These two different perspectives prove to be complementary to each other.

Section 1 presents Goffman's sociology of everyday life. Goffman's understanding of self is fundamental to his sociology, which I explore first. Then I introduce Goffman's metaphors of social life as *drama*, *ritual* and *game*, and show how each metaphor highlights different aspects of social interaction. Then I discuss how politeness fit into his elucidation of social interaction. **Section 2** discusses Goffman's notion of 'face' and 'facework'. Though Brown and Levinson claim that they borrowed their notion of 'face' from Goffman and the English folk notion, their reinterpretation of 'face' as 'face want' is a distortion of Goffman's sociology of social interaction and his understanding of self. I hope to show this as I introduce Goffman's notions of 'face' and 'facework'. As part of the conclusion, **Section 3** discusses how Bourdieu and Goffman complement each other as possible alternative ways of elucidating politeness

1. Goffman's sociology of everyday social life

1.0. Introduction to Goffman's sociology

Goffman may be seen as the quintessential sociologist of 'everyday social life' (Branaman 1997:xlv). Fine and Manning (2000:457) suggest that Goffman can hardly be considered a conventional social theorist, because in the thirty years of his academic career, he never, like many other sociologists, attempted to develop an overarching theory of society. His contribution was mainly through elucidating various social interactions as well as through his insights into self, social interaction, and social order. He also focused on deviance and inequality in social interaction. Goffman viewed 'social life' as *drama*, *ritual* and *game*. As he oscillated between these three metaphors, Goffman tried to draw attention to both the manipulative and the moral aspects of social life (Branaman 1997:xlvi). His insights have influenced linguists who value the view of

language as social practice.[134] Fine and Manning (2000:466) distinguish six components of Goffman's work: 1) pre-dramaturgical writings, 2) extended metaphorical investigations, 3) analysis of social aspects of mental illness, 4) sustained enquiry into the organization of everyday behaviour referred to as 'interaction order', 5) later investigation into the 'framing' of social encounters, and 6) analysis of language and social interaction. This order is roughly chronological, but some aspects of his work such as 'interaction order' are present all along, from his original doctoral dissertation right through to his Presidential Address to the American Sociological Association (which was his last manuscript). I will focus on 2) and 4) of the above components and discuss politeness in these particular contexts.

Politeness concerns how individuals present themselves to others. Watts, Ide and Ehlich (1992) point out that

> [t]he study of politeness focuses directly or indirectly on the presentation, maintenance and even adjustment of a concept of the "presentation of self" (cf. Goffman 1959) in the course of social interaction, on the historical growth of culturally specific patterns of behaviour, and on the distribution of status and power in social groups. (Watts et al. 1992:1)

Goffman's understanding is based on a socially constructed and socially interdependent self. I will discuss this in **1.1.** Then in **1.2.**, I will introduce Goffman's three metaphors of social interaction (*drama* in **1.2.1.**, *ritual* in **1.2.2.** and *game* in **1.2.3**). After summarising the multifaceted nature of social interaction in **1.2.4.**, I will discuss how politeness relates to these metaphors in **1.3**.

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[134] Goffman, not being a linguist himself, associated with Searle, who developed Speech Act Theory, at Berkeley in the early 1960's and later with sociolinguists, Labov and Hymes in the University of Pennsylvania. His later writings, *Frame Analysis* (1974), *Forms of Talk* (1981) and "Felicity's Condition" (1983), have made significant contributions to communication theory, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis. His influence in linguistics can be traced in Sacks and Schegloff, two leading proponents of Conversational Analysis today, who were both Goffman's students.

1.1 Goffman's understanding of self

(a). Self as a social product

Goffman assumes that "when an individual appears before others he will have many motives for trying to control the impression they receive of the situation" (1990[1959]:26). These motives are very different from those of the 'rational autonomous, independent, and calculative self' assumed in 'rational choice theory', which aims to achieve the highest payoffs. Goffman argues that any self in the presence of others, is always concerned about maintaining their own self-image judged by their performance, and therefore, is constantly engaged in impression management. Goffman (1990) writes:

> When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that a character that they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it…In line with this, there is the popular view that the individual offers his performance and puts on his show 'for the benefit of other people'. (Goffman 1990[1959]:28)

Behind this understanding of self as a product of performance lies Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor.[135]

> A correctly staged and performed character leads the audience to impute a self to a performed character, but this imputation – this self – is a *product* of a scene that comes off and is not a *cause* of it. The self, then, as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die; it is dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented… (Goffman 1990 [1959]: 244-5)

Goffman sees self not as the *cause* of his/her action but rather as a *product* of his/her performance in social interaction. It is evident that Goffman's view of self is very different from the 'rational autonomous self' assumed in the 'rational choice theory' that

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[135] Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor will be further discussed in 1.2.1 in this chapter.

Brown & Levinson adopted. Goffman acknowledges the distinction between persons themselves and roles which they may choose to play, writing in *Frame Analysis*:

> There is a relation between persons and role. But the relationship answers to the interactive system – to the frame – in which the role is performed and the self of the performer is glimpsed. Self, then, is not an entity half-concealed behind events, but a changeable formula for managing oneself during them. Just as the current situation prescribes the official guise behind which we will conceal ourselves, so it provides for where and how we will show through, the culture itself prescribing what sort of entity we must believe ourselves to be in order to have something to show through in this manner. (1974:573-4)

In any theatre production, there has to be a playwright, a producer, an actor and a part.

Burns (1992:107) explains Goffman's notion of self using this theatre metaphor.

> [t]here is a social self ("producer") which measures the appropriateness of the individual's role to the social position in which it is fixed ("part"), and also adjusts the distance between them – i.e. the degree to which it seems rewarding to measure up to performance of the role at its most typical ("actor"). But there is also an inner "I" which distinguishes between his self-image and the misconceptions of himself which he feels his behaviour must be sowing among others, or retreats even from the self-image into wondering "is this really me?" It *manages* the social self. [emphasis in the original]

Any individual person, performing the different roles expected, inevitably serves as the manager of a kind of holding company of multiple selves (Goffman 1961b:90). Central to maintenance of self is the preservation of territories of the self. The inverse of the territories of self is discussed in *Asylum* (1975). The condition of the mental patient is one in which the territories of self are most miniscule and control over them nearly non-existent. Goffman shows how self is entangled with institutionally based supports and constraints. *Asylum* suggests that attachment to self can be itself a source of mortification for individuals confined within oppressive institutions.

As presented in various passages above, Goffman sees 'self' as a *social product*. Branaman (1997:xlvi) explains that the self is a social product in two senses.

> First, it is a product of the performances put on by individuals in social interaction. There is no essence that exists inside an individual, waiting to be given expression in social situations. Rather, the sense of self arises as a result of publicly validated performances. Yet, secondly, even though individuals play an active role in creating these self-indicating performances, they are generally constrained to present images of themselves that can be socially supported in the context of a given status hierarchy. (Branaman 1997:xlvi)

(b). The two selves thesis

Goffman stresses that social life has both *moral* and *manipulative* aspects. As social beings, people are concerned with living up to the many moral standards of the social world. But as performers, they are "concerned not with the moral issue of realizing these standards, but with the amoral issue of engineering a convincing impression that these standards are being realized" (Goffman 1990[1959]:243). Fine and Manning (1992:44-8) called this his "two selves thesis": one self is a public performer giving carefully managed impressions and the second self is a cynical manipulator hidden behind the public performance (Fine and Manning 2000:469). Branaman (1997) explains these two selves neatly.

> Goffman suggests that individuals are not entirely determined by society insofar as they are able to manipulate strategically the social situation and others' impressions of themselves, fashioning themselves in much the same way as they would a character in a theatrical production. Yet, on the other hand, Goffman emphasizes that individuals are not able to choose freely the images of self they would have others accept, but rather are constrained to define themselves in congruence with the statuses, roles and relationships they are accorded by the social order. (Branaman1997:xlvii)

In this 'two selves thesis', Goffman offers a way of accommodating both structure and agency in social interaction: social actors are compelled to perform various roles as the situation requires (the structure aspect) but at the same time are capable of performing strategic and deliberate action (the agency aspect). In Goffman's project of structuration, the role of agency was not limited as it was in Bourdieu's theory of practice. In our

alternative approach to politeness we need to overcome structure and agency. Both Bourdieu and Goffman succeeded in doing so and Goffman's approach which pays close attention to the agency or the social actor complements Bourdieu's approach.

1.2 Goffman's three metaphors of social interaction

Goffman did not present his sociology of everyday social life as a grand coherent theory, based on philosophical extrapolations. Manning (1992:2) points out that although Goffman attempted over many years to develop a general theory of face-to-face interaction, he remained extremely sceptical about the possibility of discovering such a general theory. To Goffman, social life seems to comprise somewhat contradictory elements. Through detailed ethnographic observations, Goffman came up with three very different metaphors of social life: *drama, ritual* and *game* to elucidate social interaction. These three metaphors depict brilliantly the different elements involved in social interaction.

1.2.1 Social interaction as drama

(a). Co-present gatherings

Goffman presents a theatrical metaphor of social interaction in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1990[1959]), "Role distance" (1961) and *Where the action is* (1969). Giddens (1987) called Goffman 'the theorist of co-presence'. He was not interested in various small groups such as family or kinship groups. Instead, he was interested in co-present gatherings. Goffman provides the conditions of co-presence as follows: "Persons must sense that they are close enough to be perceived in whatever they are doing, including their experience of others, and close enough to be perceived in this sense of being perceived" (1963:17). Goffman claims that expressive coherence is required of socialized selves; we have variable impulses with moods and energies that

change from one moment to the next, but when we are in the presence of others, we do not allow ourselves to be subject to ups and downs but are expected to give a perfectly consistent performance at every particular moment (1990[1959]:63-4). Goffman claims that "when the individual presents himself before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society" (1990[1959]: 45). In other word, "[a] performance is 'socialised', moulded, and modified to fit into the understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented" (1990[1959]:44).

Goffman (1990[1959]:78-9) discussed the relationship between socialisation and performance. Through our socialization we have been schooled in reality, so we can properly manage our real routine. When we move into a new position in society and are given a new part to perform, we already have in our repertoire a large number of bits and pieces of performance that will be required for and adapted into a new setting. "Individuals will already have a fair idea of what modesty, deference, or righteous indignation looks like" (1990[1959]:79) Through socialization an individual may not have had opportunity to learn many specific details of a single concrete part but may have learned enough pieces of expressions so that he/she can 'fill in' and manage any part in a performance (ibid.). Goffman recognises that there are different ways of playing roles in different social or cultural settings.

> It is commonplace to say that different social groupings express in different ways such attributes as age, sex, territory, and class status, and that in each case these bare attributes are elaborated by means of a distinctive complex cultural configuration of proper ways of conducting oneself. (1990 [1959]:81)

Kate Fox (2005:13) in her popularised anthropology book, *Watching the English* provides a tangible example: "The first thing we notice when we go on holiday or business abroad is that other cultures have 'different ways of doing things', by which

we usually mean that they have rules about, say, food, mealtimes, dress, greetings, hygiene, trade, hospitality, joking, status-differentiation, etc. which are different from our own rules about these practices."

Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor of social life has many resemblances to Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*. Through socialisation, we have been prepared for the various roles we are expected to perform. Acting requires improvisation and our past embodied sense of how to act in various settings allows us to perform a new part without much difficulty. As we have each been socialised in different cultural and social settings, how we perform a particular role is heavily influenced by our performance practice in socialisation. Different social situations require different ways of acting just as Bourdieu wrote of the requirements of different market conditions. Both Goffman and Bourdieu recognised the *micro* and *macro* aspects of social interaction. Bourdieu, however, seems to have been viewing externally how *macro* structure is reproduced through *habitus* in agency whereas Goffman seemed to focus more on *micro* aspects of social interaction – how self (agency) manages to enact various socially expected roles. Goffman's close look at face-to-face interaction enabled him to have insights into the psychological dynamics of participants in social interaction.

(b). Interaction as a team performance

Where two people are co-present, people perform. Goffman (1990[1959]:83) argues that it is a limited view to understand 'interaction' from understanding the presentation of an individual performer because interaction involves the fostered and sustained cooperation of more than one participant. Therefore Goffman (1990[1959]:85) takes a 'performance team' or 'team' as the basic unit in understanding performance in social interaction. 'Team' here refers to a group of individuals who cooperate in staging the same routine. Goffman (1990[1959]:85) also writes: "if our special interest is the study

of impression management, of the contingencies which arise in fostering an impression, and of the techniques for meeting these contingencies, then the team and the team-performance may well be the best units to take as the fundamental point of reference."[136]

A team-mate is "someone whose dramaturgical cooperation one is dependent upon in fostering a given definition of the situation" (Goffman 1990[1959]:88). While a 'team-performance' is in progress, "each team-mate is forced to rely on the good conduct and behaviour of his fellows, and they, in return, are forced to rely on him. There is, then, perforce, a bond of reciprocal dependence linking team-mates to one another. (ibid.)" If an interaction is treated as a dialogue between teams, it might be convenient to call one team the performers and the other team the audience (ibid. 97). A team-mate must also endeavour to maintain the line during a performance (ibid. 94).[137] Deviance may destroy the credibility of the entire performance. When a member of the team makes a mistake in the presence of the audience, the other team-members do not punish the offender until the audience is no longer present. For instance, in an authoritarian organization like an army, in which a team of superordinates maintain the show of being right every time, one must not show hostility or disrespect towards any other superordinates in front of a member of the subordinate team (ibid. 94) Public dressing down is not acceptable even in ordinary company offices.

Even if members of a team have a different formal status and rank in a social establishment, they are still expected to cooperate in maintaining a given impression through the mutual dependence created by membership of the team (Goffman

[136] Goffman (1990[1959]:87) claims that when a performer even guides his private activity in accordance with incorporate moral standards, he may associate these standards with a reference group of some kind by creating a non-present audience for his activity. "[A]n individual may be his own audience or may imagine an audience to be present (1990[1959]:87)."

[137] Goffman used the notion 'line' in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* without an explicit definition (1990[1959]93, 95). From the context, it seems to mean 'a projected definition of the situation' (1990[1959]: 108). This notion was developed in 'face-work' in *Interaction Ritual*. See 2.1.(a)., this chapter.

1990[1959]:88). In large social establishments, where many different status grades exist during a particular interaction, participants of many different statuses may align themselves into two or more teams (1990[1959]:95). For instance, in a Japanese company, a section head, *kacho,* during the interaction with his section members, may act as their superior but the moment a department head, *bucho* comes into a room, he aligns himself with his section and presents with them a show for the benefit of the *bucho*. Goffman's notion of 'team' enables us to understand social position as a fluid notion which may be modified as a performer aligns himself/herself with different teams during interaction. (See Appendix 5-A for another example that shows the multiple roles that one person has to play and the multiple teams with whom he has to align himself during interaction.)

Seeing 'performance team' or 'team' as a basic unit for understanding performance in social interaction, Goffman provides a very different picture of self in social interaction from the Model Person in B&L's theory, which was independent, autonomous and calculative. Goffman claims that self in team performance require mutual cooperation with team-mates. A bond of reciprocal dependence linking team-mates to one another is essential in social interaction drama. Self in social interaction needs to be mutually dependent to perform well in social drama. Bourdieu explains that the appropriate action is a product of the encounter between *habitus* and *field*, but he does not explore the social actors' team effort going on in each social encounter as Goffman does. I believe that this is one strength of Goffman's microscopic approach which pays more attention to social actors or agency and yet at the same time without focusing particularly on a single actor but rather on a team performance. Politeness requires not just the practical sense of censoring your own action or utterance depending on your own positions in the field as Bourdieu emphasises but

mastery of practical know-how of how to conduct a team performance appropriately. Again Goffman complements Bourdieu in this respect.

(c). Front and back region behaviour

In explaining social life as drama, Goffman distinguishes between front and back regions (front and back stage). The front region is the place where the performance is actually given and the back region is the place where the performance of a routine is prepared (1990[1959]:231) "The performance of an individual in a front region may be seen as an effort to give the appearance that his activity in the region maintains and embodies certain standards" (Goffman 1990[1959]:110). He classifies these standards into two groupings.

> One grouping has to do with the ways in which the performer treats the audience while engaged in talk with them or in gestural interchanges that are a substitute for talk. These standards are sometimes referred to as matters of politeness. The other group of standards has to do with the way in which the performer comports himself while in visual or aural range of the audience but not necessarily engaged in talk with them. I shall use the term 'decorum' to refer to this second group of standards, although some excuse and some qualifications will have to be added to justify the usage. (Goffman 1990[1959]:110)

Goffman explicitly mentions 'politeness' here. A performer always maintains certain standards in front of the audience. Politeness refers to the standards that the performer must maintain while he/she is engaged in talk or some other interchange with the audience in the front region. When the performer is in visual or aural range of the audience, but not necessarily engaged in talk with them, the performer still maintains certain standards, which Goffman somewhat arbitrarily calls 'decorum'.[138] In other words, his 'decorum' is "the requirements of the kind not related to handling of others in conversation" (1990[1959]:110). By 'Politeness', on the other hand, he means the

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[138] Goffman subdivides decorum into moral requirements and instrumental requirements. See Goffman 1990 [1959]:110.

standards that the performer maintains while he/she is engaged in talk with the audience. Back-stage is usually located at one end of the place where the performance is presented and is "the place where the performer can reliably expect that no members of the audience will intrude" (1990[1959]):116). When the performer is back-stage, he/she can interrupt his/her performance momentarily and relax.

Goffman thus claims that politeness and decorum are requirements while the performer is front-stage. By contrast, backstage language or behaviour allows what might well be considered potentially offensive behaviour when the actor is up on front stage.

> The backstage language consists of reciprocal first-naming, cooperative decision-making, profanity, open sexual remarks, elaborate griping, smoking, rough informal dress, 'sloppy' sitting and standing posture, use of dialect or sub-standard speech, mumbling and shouting, playful aggressivity and 'kidding', inconsiderateness for the other in minor but potentially symbolic acts, minor physical self-involvement such as humming, whistling, chewing, nibbling, belching and flatulence. (1990[1959]:129)

Performers in social drama move between front stage and back stage and adjust their utterances and behaviour accordingly. Goffman claims that politeness is concerned with a performer's behaviour in the front region. Some behaviour, perfectly acceptable backstage, could be deemed offensive when frontstage. Traditionally the distinction between formal/informal situations has often been used in discussion of politeness. Lakoff argued that different rules of politeness are expected in different discourse genres (See *Ch.1* 1.1.(e).). Goffman's *front* and *back regions* are useful notions in analysing politeness. Interlocutors can be moving between frontstage and backstage in the same situations and *front* and *back region* allows more fluidity than notions such as genre or formal/informal situations.

(d). Some moral obligations for the performers

Goffman claims that "when two teams present themselves to each other for purposes of interaction the members of each team tend to maintain the line that they are what they claim to be; they tend to stay in character" (1990[1956]:166).[139] He discusses certain attributes that team members must have for successfully staging a character. "If a team is to sustain the line it has taken, the team-mate must act as if they have accepted certain moral obligations" (1990 [1959]:207). Goffman discusses defensive measures that performers should take to maintain their own show against any possible performance disruption or incidents caused by the misconduct of team-mates.[140] Performers must make sure that team members observe the expected moral obligations.

For instance, team members must maintain *dramaturgical loyalty*. They must not betray the secrets of the team when between performances (1990 [1959]:207). Also "members of the team must not exploit their presence in the front region in order to stage their own show....They must be willing to accept minor parts with good grace and perform enthusiastically whenever, wherever, and for whomever the team as a whole chooses" (1990[1959]:208). A recent personal experience may illustrate the requirement of dramaturgical loyalty that Goffman claims. Some months ago, I invited a friend of mine to dinner, because she was interested in sending an application to live in the postgraduate residence in which I currently live. I showed her around various facilities and we went down to the communal kitchen as I had promised to cook dinner for her that evening. As I was cooking dinner, she started to befriend various people who were also cooking there. She became good friends with one Indian lady. Before I had finished my cooking, my friend sat down with this Indian lady and started to eat with her. When

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[139] The notion of "a line" will be expounded in 2.1.(a).

[140] Goffman discussed defensive measures used by performers and protective measures used by the audience and which the performers take in order to make it possible for the audience to employ protective measures. They are all part of the art of impression management.

I finished my cooking, it became very awkward and my friend suddenly said to the Indian lady and me, "Oh, we can all eat together, no? No problem right?" I personally found this behaviour of hers extremely impolite. Dramaturgical loyalty explains this well. She was my invited guest and she was supposed to be loyal to her role as my guest but she was seduced by the audience and started to run her own separate show. Mutual fulfilment of moral obligations in team work is essential in performing an interaction drama appropriately. Failure to maintain dramaturgical loyalty could lead to an evaluation of being impolite. Politeness, then, requires team efforts where each maintains the moral obligations expected in order to sustain the team performance. B&L's theory focused on the Speaker's choice of politeness strategy at the individual level. Goffman's approach of taking 'team' as a basic unit of analysis (cf. 1.2.1.(b). this chapter) was new and unique. (See Appendix 5-B for other moral obligations of team members)

(e). The standards expected of the performers on front stage

Goffman argues that self is a product of performance. Evaluation of one's performance might be at the same time the evaluation of that person's character. Failure to perform to the standards expected when the performer is on front-stage, results not only in disruption in social interaction but also in negative evaluation of the person him/herself performing the role. Therefore individuals as performers are concerned with living up to the various moral standards involved in the drama of social life. Goffman defines 'politeness' as the standards that the performer on front stage maintains while he/she is engaged in talk with the audience (1990[1959]:110).

These standards that Goffman discusses are far broader than those which Brown and Levinson (1987 [1978]) use in defining 'politeness'. B&L assume that *certain acts* (e.g. request, disagreement) are intrinsically face-threatening and

'politeness' consists of 'redressive' actions taken in order to counterbalance the potentially disruptive effect of face threatening acts (FTA). Goffman, on the other hand, seems to argue that social actors performing on front stage are *constantly* at risk of losing face or experiencing embarrassment if they fail to meet the expected standards, in other words, the possibility of face loss depends on how you perform your role. In Goffman's thought, social self as performer and the sense of self image are intertwined. Face loss or face threat is not related to the intrinsic nature of particular acts but rather to the quality of performance of the social actors, i.e. *how* the social actors carry out the dramatic performance of social interaction. Any performance by social actors, failing to perform to the standards expected in social interaction, may cause face loss on the part of the performer and/or audience. Goffman argues that politeness is the concern of performers when they are on the front stage. As discussed in chapter 4, Bourdieu also recognised that politeness concern is commonly present in all linguistic production, as all utterances are to some extent *euphemized* as the product of the relationship between *habitus* and *field.* Again Goffman's sociology is compatible with Bourdieu's theory of practice and complements Bourdieu giving closer attention to the social actors themselves.

1.2.2 Social interaction as ritual

(a). Durkheim's religious ritual translated into interaction ritual

Another metaphor of social interaction that Goffman employs is ritual.[141] Goffman's notion of 'face' and 'face-work', which has been discussed by many politeness researchers, was originally part of this metaphor of social interaction as ritual. In this section, I will discuss the origin of his ritual metaphor and two different kinds of

[141] Goffman's ritualistic metaphor of social interaction is expressed in four essays in *Interaction Ritual* (1967) – "On Face-work (1955)", "Nature of Deference and Demeanour (1956)", "Embarrassment and Social Organization (1956)", "Alienation from Interaction (1957)" – as well as in *Behaviour in Public Places* (1963) and *Relation in Public* (1971).

ceremonial activity, 'deference' and 'demeanour'. 'Face' and 'face-work' will be discussed separately in Section 2. Durkheim (1915) believes that society is at its core a moral reality: a ritual is a mechanism by which moral sentiments are produced or shaped into specific social forms. Durkheim argues that in a secularised [western] society, 'individualism' has become a religion; 'individualism as religion' in modern society is the worship of the human personality, the social person.[142] Goffman (1967:45) argues that the very capacity and propensity to be bound by moral rules and to become a social construct is part of universal human nature.

Goffman, following Durkheim's (1915) ideas, suggests that the Durkheimian notion regarding primitive religious ritual could be translated into concepts of *deference* and *demeanour* in everyday social interaction. In the last paragraph of "the Nature of Deference and Demeanour" (1967) Goffman writes:

> Many gods have been done away with, but the individual himself stubbornly remains as a deity of considerable importance. He walks with some dignity and is the recipient of many little offerings. He is jealous of the worship due him, yet, approached in the right spirit, he is ready to forgive those who may have offended him. Because of their status relative to his, some persons will find him contaminating while others will find they contaminate him, in either case finding that they must treat him with ritual care. Perhaps the individual is so viable a god because he can actually understand the ceremonial significance of the way he is treated, and quite on his own can respond dramatically to what is proffered him. In contacts between such deities there is no need for middlemen; each of these gods is able to serve as his own priest. (1967:95)

Durkheim claims that in secularised society, gods may not be worshipped any more but instead human individuals are regarded as though they were gods and treated with ceremonial rituals.

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[142] Durkheim, in *the Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1915:73) "The human personality is a sacred thing; one dare not violate it nor infringe its bounds, while at the same time the greatest good is in communion with others."

(b). Demeanour and deference

Goffman delineates two basic components of ceremonial activity: *demeanour* and *deference. Demeanour* refers to "that element of the individual's ceremonial behaviour typically conveyed through deportment, dress, and bearing, which serves to express to those in his immediate presence that he is a person of certain desirable or undesirable qualities" (1967:77). It is the way an actor presents himself with 'sacredness' in the co-present situation. Goffman gives examples of attributes of individuals who have proper demeanour in [American middle-class] society.

> In our society, the "well" or "properly" demeaned[143] individual displays such attributes as: discretion and sincerity; modesty regarding self; sportsmanship; command of speech and physical movement; self-control over his emotions, his appetites, and his desires; poise under pressure and so forth (1967:77)".

Goffman comments that individuals cannot establish their own demeanour by claiming that they possess it. "Demeanour involves attributes derived from interpretations others make of the way in which the individual handles himself during social intercourse" (1967:78). However, the individual cannot instantaneously be accorded evaluation as a 'well-demeaned' person from one social interaction. It is the cumulative outcome of practices over a period of time. Goffman (1967:77) points out that a good demeanour is often associated with proper socialisation which also does not happen instantaneously. Thus good demeanour, which is closely related to the self image, is only achievable as an accumulation of others' evaluations of the person as well-demeaned over a period of time through different social interactions.

The second basic element in ceremonial activity is *deference*: *Deference* is a ritual behaviour directed towards others (the recipients) as an expression of respect for

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[143] 'a well-demeaned' person refers to a person who has a proper demeanour. This is an archaic usage according to the Oxford English Dictionary and it is confusing because 'to demean' in modern English usage is 'to cause a severe loss in the dignity and respect for somebody.' But I have kept Goffman's use of the word as it seemed appropriate to do so.

their 'sacredness'. Goffman defines *deference* as "that component of activity which functions as a symbolic means by which appreciation is regularly conveyed *to* a recipient *of* this recipient, or of something of which this recipient is taken as a symbol, extension or agent" (1967:56). Such activities "represent ways in which an actor celebrates and confirms his relation to a recipient" (1967:56-7). Deference behaviour tends to be honorific and politely toned, conveying appreciation of the recipient that is in many ways more complimentary to the recipient than the actor's true sentiment might warrant (Goffman 1967:60).

Goffman defines two kinds of deference: *avoidance ritual* and *presentation ritual*. *Avoidance ritual* refers to "those forms of deference which lead the actor to keep at a distance from the recipient and not violate…the "ideal sphere" that lies around the recipient" (1967:62). Avoidance of using other's personal names as a system of deferential stand-off arrangement is an example of avoidance ritual. In general one tends to avoid a person of high status out of deference to him. Another example of avoidance ritual is not to bring into discussion matters that might be painful, embarrassing, or humiliating to the recipient (1967: 65). The second kind, *presentation ritual* refers to "acts through which the individual makes specific attestation to recipients concerning how he regards them and how he will treat them in the on-coming interaction" (1967:71). "While avoidance rituals specify what is not to be done, presentational rituals specify what is to be done" (ibid). Goffman gives salutations and the giving of compliments as examples of presentation ritual. Thus the avoidance ritual involves keeping the 'ideal sphere' between each individual, while the presentation ritual is enacted through an individual's specific attention towards a recipient concerning how he or she regards them.

Goffman recognises that "different societies and subcultures have different

ways of conveying deference and demeanour, different ceremonial meanings for the same act, and different amounts of concern over such things as poise and privacy" (1967:85). "The gesture of deference expected by members of one society have sometimes been incompatible with the standards of demeanour maintained by members of another" (1967:82). He gives an example of the difficulty in diplomatic relations between Britain and China during the nineteenth century caused by incompatible standards of deference and demeanour (Douglas 1895:291-96 in Goffman 1967:82). Different ways of conveying deference and demeanour may be well explained by Bourdieu's *bodily hexis*. Through socialisation into a particular family, community or/and society, people acquire particular ways of conveying deference and demeanour, which become part of their *habitus*. Again Bourdieu and Goffman complement each other, as both suggest that people acquire particular ways of social interaction through their own socialisation.

(c) Goffman's avoidance and presentation rituals and B&L's theory

As discussed in chapter 2, B&L (1987:43) stated that their distinction between negative and positive politeness had been borrowed from Durkheim's distinction between negative and positive rites and they also acknowledged the 'ritual' character of politeness stressed by Goffman. In chapter 2, I discussed B&L' problematic notion of 'face' (See *Ch.2* 2.2.2.(b)), but I saved the discussion of its deviation from Goffman's understanding of face until now. B&L's negative and positive politeness bear some resemblance to Goffman's *avoidance ritual* and *presentation ritual*, but the content is quite different. Goffman's two rituals of deference are performed not out of the individual's wants as B&L claimed, but rather out of respect or deference for each other's dignity. The central meaning of 'face' in Goffman's notion, has much to do with human dignity, which is consistent with English common usage. Face is threatened

when human dignity is threatened. B&L's actual interpretation of 'face' as 'face-want' is a weakened reduction of the rich notions of human dignity and honour, expressed by Goffman as 'interaction ritual'.

Furthermore, Goffman points out that "individuals may desire, earn and deserve deference, but by and large he is not allowed to give it to himself, being forced to seek it from others" (1967:58). Goffman points out that this is why individuals need to enter into interaction and relationship with one another. Goffman adds that "[i]f the individual could give himself the deference he desired there might be a tendency for society to disintegrate into islands inhabited by solitary cultish men, each in continuous worship at his own shrine" (1967:58). Thus at the heart of Goffman's notion of *deference*, there is assumed the socially interdependent self, which requires others to give and to receive *deference*. In other words, Goffman affirms *intersubjectivity*, rather than modernity's notion of self, adopted by B & L which begins with *the individual subject*.

1.2.3 Social interaction as a game

The third metaphor Goffman uses to elucidate social interaction is *game*.[144] Goffman observes the interplay of ritual and game-like aspects in social interaction. Goffman's notion of 'face' represents the ritualistic aspect of social life. Interlocutors protect, defend, and maintain face in social interaction to preserve a ritual order or equilibrium. However, Goffman also recognises the game-like aspect of this ritual. Interlocutors are playing games in maintaining ritual order as "a kind of player in this ritual game who

[144] Both Bourdieu and Goffman employed the analogy of *games*. They spoke of different kinds of games and expressed different things through use of various *game* analogies.. Bourdieu's 'game' referred to an athlete's serious play as team games played in a court, or on a pitch, like basketball or rugby, through which he discussed *habitus*, practical sense, feel for the game, or embodied sensibility, which cannot be put into words. Goffman, on the other hand, speaks of games that are played seated around a table such as chess or bridge (1961:8, 27). Goffman seems to have tried through employing his metaphor of 'games' to highlight the competitiveness, and cunning of the players as well as fun, excitement or fear in playing games.

copes honourably or dishonourably, diplomatically or undiplomatically, with the judgmental contingencies of the situation" (1967:31). Goffman (1967:31) argues that "as players of the ritual game they have to lead themselves into duels". Goffman (1967:32) argues that there is a distinction between the value of a hand drawn at cards and the capacity of the person who plays it. Similarly, "even though it appears that once a person has gained a reputation for good or bad play, this reputation may become part of the face he must later play at maintaining" (ibid.32). Then while it takes time for a person to gain a reputation, in order to retain that reputation, the individual must keep alert in playing his ritual game so that his face may not be lost.

Goffman describes various types of games such as 'character contests' (1967:240), and 'expression games' (1969:4). Character is the capacity to maintain composure in the face of challenge (1967:217) but one can also say that character can be gained by putting oneself on the line and making a good showing (1967:237). 'Character contests' are interpersonal disputes over whose status claims or conceptions of proper treatment of self and others will be allowed to prevail (1967:241). So it is a moral game in social interaction and seen as ritual. 'Expression games' are games of how one may successfully control giving away information during interaction. In face-to-face interaction, a great deal of information is released whether the subject (speaker) likes it or not. For instance, a person's appearance and manner can provide information about their gender, age, social class, occupation, competencies and intent (Goffman 1967:5). It is not the official purpose of social interaction but can be very significant in every social situation: "one participant will be an observer with something to gain from assessing expressions, and another will be a subject with something to gain from manipulating from this process" (Goffman 1969:81). Sometimes a participant leaks certain information intentionally in order that it may be

observed. How to control such information strategically through their expression becomes a game (Goffman 1967:10). Branaman (1997:lxxii) describes the seriousness of the expression game. The possibility of the subject's faking, or pretending to fake, leaves the observer in a state of uncertainty as to the reality of the subject's moves and "the possibility that the observer may penetrate the subject's show leaves the subject in a state of uncertainty as to how his moves are being interpreted by the observer."

Goffman (1969:81) maintains that such game aspects are a part of almost every social interaction. In 1.1.(b), I mentioned that social life has both *moral* and *manipulative* aspects. Social interaction as a game involves much of the latter aspect by engineering a convincing impression in public performance. Here is the interplay between the game and drama aspects of social interaction. B&L emphasised the strategic aspects of politeness in their study. Goffman's game metaphor also recognises this strategic aspect inherent in social interaction but Goffman's multiple metaphors allow him to express that politeness also displays elements of drama and ritual. His use of metaphors allowed him to elucidate the multifaceted nature of social interaction.

1.2.4. The multifaceted nature of social interaction

As discussed in the previous three subsections, Goffman employed three different metaphors, *drama*, *ritual* and *game* to elucidate social interaction. Goffman demonstrated that these seemingly very different pictures are all part of the enigmatic nature of social interaction. Social interaction as performance is simultaneously an expression of deference to the social order that is ritual as well as a move in a strategic game. Social actors strategically craft their performances, and courses of action, but at the same time aim to be viable members of a morally cohesive social order. On one side, the performance of morality requires strategy. On the other side, ritual order constrains

their strategic moves and performances (Branaman 1997: lxxiii). Goffman's brilliance is revealed in his elucidation of this multifaceted nature of social interaction using these apt and interesting metaphors.

As I have shown, Lakoff, Leech and Brown & Levinson endeavoured to construct theories which would meet the demands of the *modernist* academic enterprise. Early pragmatics theories, upon which Lakoff and Leech built their own theories, are based on rationalistic assumptions (See *Ch.1* 3.(a).) Levinson (1983:103) comments that Grice's maxims derive from general considerations of 'rationality' applicable to all kinds of co-operative exchanges. In such approaches, social interactions tend to be reduced to matters of 'intentions' and 'acts'. Brown & Levinson moved beyond early pragmatics and turned to Durkheim's anthropology and Goffman's notion of 'face', searching for new theoretical constructs to explain politeness. B&L, however, *demythologized*[145] the original notion of Goffman's 'face', eliminated the ritualistic elements and reinterpreted it as 'face-want' to meet *modernist* epistemological demands of 'rationality' and 'objectivity'. By contrast, Goffman's sociology is not motivated by such *modernist* assumptions characterised by scientific rationality. In fact, the elucidation of social interaction using his three different metaphors is a long way from scientific rationality. The concepts that Goffman discusses in his sociology such as 'ritual' and 'moral obligations', are not favourite notions that *modernist* researchers have chosen to use in their theory construction. Thus I contend that Goffman's sociology of social interaction is not a theory constructed to meet such *modernist* assumptions but rather the fruit of reflection on his painstaking naturalistic observations and ethnographic studies in various places over the years. While *modernist* social scientists are driven or haunted by the Cartesian Anxiety that they ought to establish a unifying universal principle to meet

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[145] The word 'demythologize' comes from the German theologian, Rudolf Bultmann who demythologized Christian teaching in the New Testament and reinterpreted doctrines in terms of existential and individualistic meanings.

modernist theoretical requirements, Goffman seems to have been convinced that such approaches would not do justice to the multifaceted complex nature of social interaction that he observed through his ethnographic fieldwork. Thus rather than establishing a 'grand narrative' of social interaction, Goffman elucidated the enigmatic nature of social interaction in a unique way through these triple metaphors. Goffman may not have intended to adopt a *postmodern* approach, but his approach definitely goes beyond the assumptions of modern theory construction. I will discuss this further in the Conclusion chapter.

1.3. Politeness as commitment to interaction order

To conclude Section 1, concerning Goffman's sociology and his three metaphors of social interaction, I propose a broader view of politeness as *commitment to 'interaction order'*. Goffman was expected to give the Presidential address for the American Sociological Association in 1982 but his illness, stomach cancer, was so advanced that he was unable to deliver this paper in person. The title was 'The interaction order', which was published posthumously as an article in the American Sociological Review. In some ways, this article is the culmination of his study of social interaction. Goffman explains the *interaction order* as follows:

> No implications are intended concerning how "orderly" such activity ordinarily is, or the role of norms and rules in supporting such orderliness as does obtain. Yet it appears to me that as an order of activity, the interaction one, more than any other perhaps, is in fact orderly, and that this orderliness is predicted on a large base of shared cognitive presuppositions, if not normative ones, and self-sustained restraints....The workings of the interaction order can easily be viewed as the consequences of systems of enabling conventions, in the sense of the ground rules for a game, the provisions of a traffic code or rules of syntax of a language. (Goffman 1983:5)

Goffman (1983:5) claims that even "individuals who systematically violate the norms of

the interaction order may nonetheless be dependent upon them most of the time, including some of the time during which they are actively engaged in violating them".

It is through his concept of 'interaction order' that Goffman was able to encapsulate both structure and agency. In structuralism, the underlying assumption is that that it is the social structure/system, which is external, which determines the actor's behaviour . The 'interaction order' that Goffman discusses is not the external structural constraint upon individuals as is characteristic of structuralism. Rawls (1987:141) writes:

> Goffman presents a picture of constraints on interaction which are *internal* to interactional scenes. He paints a picture wherein social order and meaning require a particular interactional relationship between individual and group. Actions do not acquire their meaning primarily through a relation to external ends but rather through a commitment to the internal ends of the interaction order. For Goffman the performance requires commitment even for the simplest of interactions.

All meaningful relationships of co-presence are characterised by this mutual commitment to the interaction order. This mutual commitment is fundamental to any social interaction. Having rejected structuralism, Goffman did not go on to subscribe to the opposite notion that individuals constitute social structure. Such an idea is impossible because self is not a fixed notion: Goffman viewed self as the *product* of social interaction (See 1.1.(a)., this chapter). Commitment to the interaction order is treated as *moral obligation*. Goffman (1959:13) writes that "society is organized on the principle that any individual who possesses certain social characteristics has a moral right to expect that others will value and treat him in a correspondingly appropriate way". Individuals are committed to the interaction order in order to have their social selves maintained because failure to do so puts their self at risk. Rawls (1987:136) comments that Goffman offered a unique way of resolving the dichotomy of structure and agency "via the idea of an interaction order which is constitutive of self and at the

same time places demands on social structure".

What then exactly is politeness in Goffman's sociology? Goffman did mention politeness or tact in different places in his work, so it is not easy to pinpoint exactly how he defines politeness. As I have already argued, in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman (1990[1959]: 110) wrote that the standards that the performer on front stage maintains while he/she is engaged in talk with the audience are sometime referred to as matters of politeness. Performers are expected to maintain the moral standards involved in the drama performance of social interaction. Dramaturgical loyalty and discipline are some of the attributes expected during performances. It is vital for performers to sustain the standards of conduct expected. Failure to perform to the standard expected potentially results in the negative evaluation of the person himself/herself because social self is the *product* of a scene.

In *Interaction Ritual*, Goffman (1967:49-50) discussed rules of conduct as guides for action, which infuse all areas of activity. Rules of conduct impinge upon individuals as *obligations*, establishing how an actor is morally constrained to conduct himself; and also indirectly as *expectations*, establishing how others are morally bound to act in regard to him. What is one person's obligation is another's expectation. Goffman argued that ritual requirements in social life may be called ceremonial rules, which "guide(s) conduct in matters felt to have secondary or even no significance in their own right, having their primary importance – officially anyway – as a conventionalized means of communication by which the individual expresses his character or conveys his appreciation of the other participants in the situation" (1967:54).

He argued that most actions guided by rules of conduct are performed unthinkingly. Only when his routines are blocked, may a person discover that his own

little neutral actions have all along been consonant with the proprieties of his group and that his failure to perform them has become a matter of shame and humiliation. Similarly a person takes for granted his expectations regarding others and only when things go unexpectedly wrong, does he suddenly discover that he has grounds for indignation. Goffman pointed out that failure to perform has psychological effects, because Goffman saw that whether individuals choose to abide by the rules of conduct or to break them is closely related to their sense of self. Goffman's ritual metaphor explains how individuals engage in ceremonial behaviour during social interaction. Ceremonial behaviour such as *deference* and *demeanor* are expected because "the self is in part a ceremonial thing, a sacred object which must be treated with proper ritual care and in turn must be presented in a proper light to others. As a means through which this self is established, the individual acts with demeanor while in contact with others and is treated by others with deference" (Goffman 1967:91). These are ritual rules of conduct (obligations and expectations) in social interaction – in which the self must be honoured as a sacred object. I contend that these ritual requirements are also part of the concern of politeness.

What Goffman signifies by various terms such as 'ground rules for a game', 'traffic rules of interaction', 'ground rules of interaction', 'the standards' and 'rules of conduct' in various publications all seem to point to the 'interaction order'. All the participants in co-present situations are committed to the 'interaction order'. As the nature of social interaction seems complex when expressed in terms of these three different metaphors, the nature of the 'interaction order' has different dimensions. Sometimes, it is expressed as performing the expected role of being a good team-mate, keeping dramaturgical loyalty and discipline, performing ceremonial duty or ritual requirements. Commitment to the interaction order would involve all these. These may

be seen as 'moral obligations' but at the same time 'strategic play in the game'. *I contend that this complex commitment to the interaction order is, in effect, what we call 'politeness'.*

Goffman's use of 'rules' as in 'rules of conduct', 'ground rules' of interaction reminds us of Lakoff's and Leech's structure-centred approach of seeing politeness as pragmatic rules/principles. Goffman's notion of 'strategic game' is reminiscent of B&L's agency-centred approach of viewing politeness as 'strategies to minimize face threat'. Goffman managed to encapsulate both elements in his 'interaction order'. However, for Goffman, maintaining one another's face is a ritual requirement, as the self must be honoured as a sacred object in social interaction, something which B&L eliminated in their rationalistic theoretical framework. In the following section, I will discuss Goffman's notions of 'face' and 'face-work'.

2. Goffman's notion of face and face-work

As discussed earlier, in politeness studies, 'face' was an important notion in B&L's theory. Though B&L claimed that they borrowed Goffman's notion of 'face' for their theory, their interpretation of 'face' as 'face-want' deviates both from the English folk notion and from the Chinese notion of 'face' (*Ch.2* 2.2.2.). I have saved discussion of Goffman's notion of 'face' until this chapter. Earlier in this chapter I pointed out that in B&L's understanding of face, Goffman's underlying assumption about self as fundamentally a 'social product' is obscured and the ritual elements in social interaction, which are the basis for 'face' are lost. In this section, I expound Goffman's account of 'face' and 'face-work', both of which relate to the ritualistic aspect of social life, mainly expressed in *Interaction Ritual* (1967).[146] Some discussion of 'face-work' may

[146] Brown & Levinson's limited interpretation of Goffman's 'face' has been criticised by several researchers (Werkhofer 1992, Mao 1994 (in the Chinese context), de Kadt 1998 (in the Zulu context)).

overlap with that of 'face', but I will first expound Goffman's notion of 'face' in **2.1.** and then Goffman's 'face-work' in **2.2.** I will contrast them with B&L's understanding of 'face' and 'face threat' where appropriate.

2.1. 'Face' in Goffman's work

(a). Goffman's definition of face

Goffman defines 'face' as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has during a particular contact" (1967:5). He also claims that "[f]ace is an image of self.. delineated in terms of approved social attributes" (ibid.). B&L's (1987:61) definition of 'face as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" seems to have some resemblance to Goffman because the same term 'the self-image' is used in both definitions, but the content is quite different. In order to understand Goffman's first definition, one needs to understand what Goffman means by 'line'.

> Every person lives in a world of social encounters, involving him either in face-to-face or mediated contact with other participants. In each of these contacts, he tends to act out what is sometimes called a *line* – that is, a pattern of verbal and non-verbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself. Regardless of whether a person intends to take a line, he will find that he has done so in effect. The other participants will assume that he has more or less wilfully taken a stand, so that if he is to deal with their response to him he must take into consideration the impression they have possibly formed of him. (Goffman 1967:5)

According to the above, a line is "a pattern of verbal and non-verbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself." Once the participant in interaction takes a line, it means he/she has taken a stand and everybody expects him/her to maintain the social attributes delineated

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More recently Bargiela-Chiappini (2003) reconsidered Goffman's notion of 'face' in her article "Face and politeness: new (insights) for old (concepts).

by the line. So, 'face' reflects the line assumed by others during interaction based upon the participant's verbal and non-verbal behaviour. The participant's 'face' is his/her self-image delineated in terms of approved social attributes based on the line he/she takes during interaction. Watts (2003:103-7) pointed out how Brown & Levinson's notions of face deviated from Goffman's: In Goffman's case, a "'member' makes a claim for positive *social value* which is constrained by the line others interpret him to be taking during the course of interaction" (Watts 2003:104). Thus, the "social value is dependent on the other 'members' and it can change from one moment to the next. It is an image of the self constructed in accordance with social attributes approved by others, and it may be unstable and changing." (ibid.) By contrast, Watts points out that B&L "seem to be thinking of the self as a stable core of values lodged somewhere in the individual" (Watts 2003:105). Watts also suggests that "the Brown-Levinsonian 'member'…appears to have already constructed, prior to the interaction, a self-image that s/he wants to be upheld by society" (ibid).[147] The next passage shows how Goffman's face depends on others' evaluation of the participants several lines.

> A person may be said to *have* or *be in* or *maintain* face when the line he effectively takes presents an image of him that is internally consistent, that is supported by judgments and evidence conveyed by other participants, and that is confirmed by evidence conveyed through impersonal agencies in the situation. At such times the person's face clearly is something that is not lodged in or on his body, but rather something that is diffusely located in the flow of events in the encounter and becomes manifest only when these events are read and interpreted for the appraisals expressed in them. (Goffman 1967: 6-7)

When the line the participant effectively takes presents his/her image that is internally consistent, i.e. supported by judgement and evidence conveyed by other participants and confirmed through impersonal agency's in the situation, he/she *has* or *is in* or *maintains*

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[147] Among postmodern politeness researchers, only Watts (2003) has turned to Bourdieu in their new approach to politeness. Neither Eelen (2001) nor Mills (2003) discussed Goffman in their work. Watts (2003) gave his own definition of 'face' and 'face-work' and incorporated them into his theoretical framework. (See Appendix 5-C for details.

face. Thus 'face' depends on judgement and evidence conveyed by other participants. Goffman also claims that "the person's face clearly is something that is not lodged in or on his body, but rather something that is diffused, located in the flow of events in the encounter" (ibid. 7.). Goffman also writes:

> While his social face can be his most personal possession and the center of his security and pleasure, it is only on loan to him from society; it will be withdrawn unless he conducts himself in a way that is worthy of it. Approved attributes and their relation to face make of every man his own jailer; this is a fundamental social constraint even though each man may like his cell. (Goffman 1967:10)

So Goffman affirms that social face is "on loan…from society" (1967:10) and the participant is expected to conduct himself in a way that is worthy of it. Otherwise that particular face is withdrawn. If a particular social encounter is not a first time encounter, there may be a past history of encounter between these particular participants. Then a line may be carried on from the past encounter to the current encounter and may have implications for any future encounter. In order to maintain face, i.e. the positive self-image, the participant must continue to maintain that line over a series of encounters with other participants. Goffman's face depends on evaluation of others as he writes that "[a]pproved attributes and their relation to face make of every man his own jailer" (ibid). The fundamental difference may be that Goffman's notion of 'face' assumes a socially interdependent self, while B&L's theory assume an independent autonomous self.[148] Based on these different self models, B&L interpret 'face' as being associated with individualistic want, whereas Goffman's notion of 'face' assumes inter-subjectivity and interdependence. Furthermore, there is historicity involved in Goffman's notion of 'face', while rational calculative action in B&L's theory does not

[148] The English folk notion 'face' that I discussed in *Ch.2* 2.2.2.(c). is also something accorded by others and society through long-term evaluation of the individual's conduct over a period of time, which is consistent with Goffman's notion of 'face'.

include any time element in their theoretical construct.

(b). Characteristics of Goffman's face

In this section, I will highlight some characteristics of Goffman's face, which proves to be different from B&L's interpretation of 'face'.

First, Goffman's face involves *emotions*, while B&L's 'face' is rationally -oriented as they interpreted 'face' as 'face-wants' in rational choice theory. Goffman writes:

> A person tends to experience an immediate emotional response to the face which a contact with others allows him; he cathects his face: his "feelings" become attached to it....If events establish a face for him that is better than he might have expected, he is likely to "feel good"; if his ordinary expectations are not fulfilled, one expects that he will "feel bad" or "feel hurt". In general, a person's attachment to a particular face, coupled with the ease with which disconfirming information can be conveyed by himself and others, provides one reason why he finds that participation in any contact with others is a commitment. A person will also have feelings about the face sustained for the other participants, and while these feelings may differ in quantity and direction from those he has for his own face, they constitute an involvement in the face of others that is as immediate and spontaneous as the involvement he has in his own face. (1967:6)

A person is emotionally concerned with his/her own face and has feelings about other people's face. Such a person described in Goffman's "face" is totally incompatible with B&L's "cognitive, individualistic interpretation of 'face'" (Bargiela-Chiappini 2003: 1455) based on the rational actor model. There is no place for emotions in their kind of model.

Secondly, as individuals are emotionally involved concerning their face; maintaining face is directly connected with their emotional security. Goffman explains the emotional state of the person when he/she is *in face, in the wrong face* and *out of face*.

> A person may be said to *be in wrong face* when information is brought forth in some way about his social worth which cannot be integrated, even with effort, into the line that is being sustained for him. A person may be said to *be out of face* when he participates in a contact with others without having ready a line of the kind participants in such situations are expected to take. [emphasis in the original] (1967:8)

> When a person senses that he is *in face*, he typically responds with feelings of confidence and assurance. Firm in the line he is taking, he feels that he can hold his head up and openly present himself to others. He feels some security and some relief—as he also can when the others feel he is in wrong face, but successfully hide these feelings from him. When a person is *in wrong face* or *out of face*, expressive events are being contributed to the encounter which cannot be readily woven into the expressive fabric of the occasion. Should he sense that he is *in wrong face* or *out of face*, he is likely to feel ashamed and inferior because of what has happened to the activity on his account and because of what may happen to his reputation as a participant. Further he may feel bad because he had relied upon the encounter to support an image of self to which he has become emotionally attached and which he now finds threatened.[emphasis added] (ibid.)

Thus Goffman writes that when a person is *in face*, he/she feels emotionally secure and confident, whereas when a person is *in the wrong face* or *out of face*, he/she feels ashamed and embarrassed because of what may happen to his/her reputation as a participant and finds his/her image of self now threatened. In *Ch 2* 2.2.2.(b), I argued that when dignity, honour and reputations are threatened, it will cause face loss or embarrassment.[149] Goffman's notion of 'face', like the English folk notion of 'face' supports this, but B&L's 'face-want' is unable to explain this.

Thirdly, Goffman claims that participants in social interaction are expected to sustain a standard of consideration for others as well as maintaining their own self-respect.

> Just as the members of any group are expected to have self-respect, and also he is expected to sustain a standard of considerateness; he is expected to go to certain lengths to save the feelings and the face of others present, and he is expected to do this willingly and spontaneously because of emotional identification with the others and with their feelings. In consequence, he is

[149] Scheff (2006) evaluates Goffman's analysis of the importance of emotions for understanding social existence and the emotional-relational grounds of intersubjectivity positively and elaborates on them as a possible new paradigm for social science.

> disinclined to witness the defacement of others....The combined effect of the rule of self-respect and the rule of considerateness is that the person tends to conduct himself during an encounter so as to maintain both his own face and the face of the other participants (ibid.10-11)

Goffman claims that the participant is expected to go to certain lengths to save the face of others present as well as his/her own and does this spontaneously because he/she is emotionally identified with others. Goffman here assumes a 'socially interdependent self'. Brown & Levinson tried to mix their technical notion of 'face' as 'face-want' with this kind of (Goffmanean) 'face', which assumes mutual vulnerability. However, as argued in *Ch.3* 1.2.2.(b), 'methodological individualism', presupposed in the rational choice theory adopted by B&L, does not support such collective or altruistic action. The 'rational actor' is assumed to be self-seeking and goal-oriented, an autonomous rational calculative self. This double notion of 'face' in B&L's theory, assuming two incompatible self models, does not work.

Fourthly, Goffman's face involves *moral obligation* to maintain the line and the line maintained by and for a person during social interaction is not what he/she wants to claim freely but is of a legitimate institutionalized kind. Goffman writes:

> The line maintained by and for a person during contact with others tends to be of a legitimate institutionalized kind. During a contact of a particular type, an interactant of known or visible attributes can expect to be sustained in a particular face and can feel that it is morally proper that this should be so. Given his attributes and the conventionalized nature of the encounter, he will find a small choice of lines will be open to him and a small choice of faces will be waiting for him. (1967:7)

Thus the person's choice of line in any particular situation is constrained by society or community. An interactant feels that it is morally proper to act in such ways. This 'moral' nature reminds us of the original Chinese notion of face. (See *Ch.2* 2.2.2.(d)). Goffman (1967:6) also writes: "[o]ne's own face and the face of others are constructs of the same order; it is the rules of the group and the definition of the situation which

determine how much feeling one is to have for face and how this feeling is to be distributed among the faces involved." Goffman's notion of 'face' is far from the *individualistic* want that the Model Person wants to claim as in B&L's theory, but is rather *collectivistic* and structure-centred in the sense that the participant must maintain the line in a way expected within the particular society/community.[150]

To summarise the discussion in this section, Goffman's notion of face is incompatible with B&L's technical notion of 'face' as individual's 'face-want'; Goffman's notion of face, which assumes the socially interdependent self has quite different characteristics from B&L's notion of 'face-want', which assumes a rational autonomous self, which may be summarised as follows:

1. *Goffman's face involves emotions. How a person maintains his/her face is closely related to his/her emotional security and confidence. The self, emotionally attached to his/her self-image and concerned with his/her reputation as a participant, usually maintains his/her face and that of other participants in order to avoid embarrassment.*

2. *Goffman claims that participant is expected to be considerate about others' face as well as protecting his/her own face. Maintenance of one's own face and that of others present during an encounter is expected as part of the moral social code. Then it is considered a mandatory responsibility rather than 'wants' that B & L say that individuals claim.*

3. *Maintaining one's own face and that of others is not only a mandatory responsibility but of utmost importance to the social self. Failure to maintain one's own face potentially puts oneself at risk.*

4. *It is moral obligation for the participant to maintain the line as prescribed in each particular society or community.*

[150] Different societies follow different methods by which individuals are expected to maintain their own face. "As an aspect of the social code of any social circle, one may expect to find an understanding as to how far a person should go to save his face. Once he takes on a self-image expressed through face he will be expected to live up to it. In different ways in different societies he will be required to show self-respect, abjuring certain actions because they are above and beneath him, while forcing himself to perform others even though they cost him dearly. (Goffman1967:9)

2.2 Goffman's face-work

Goffman develops his notion of *face-work* to explain different measures that a person takes to maintain their behaviour in order to be consistent with his/her *face*.

> By *face-work* I mean to designate the actions taken by a person to make whatever he is doing consistent with face. Face-work serves to counteract "incidents" –that is, events whose effective symbolic implication threatens face. Thus poise is one important type of face-work, for through poise the person controls his embarrassment and hence the embarrassment that he and others might have over his embarrassment. Whether or not the full consequences of face-saving actions are known to the person who employs them, they often become habitual and standardized practices; they are like traditional plays in a game or traditional steps in a dance. Each person, subculture, and society seems to have its own characteristics repertoire of face-saving practices. It is to this repertoire that people partly refer when they ask what a person or culture is "really" like. (Goffman 1967:12-13)

Summarising from the above:

1) *Face-work designates actions taken by people to make what they are doing consistent with their face.*

2) *Face-work serves to counteract face-threatening incidents or events.*

3) *Poise is an important type of face-work and through poise the person controls his embarrassment.*

4) *How one performs face-saving acts often becomes habitual and standardized like traditional play in a game.*

5) *Each person, sub-culture and society has its own characteristic pattern of face-saving practices. It is almost equated with what that person, sub-culture or society is actually like.*

The notion of *face-threatening acts* in B&L's theory probably derived from the above account of face-work in Goffman's *Interaction ritual.* However, I find a significant difference between the two: B&L argued that "certain acts intrinsically threaten face, and are thus called *FTA* (Face Threatening Acts), namely those acts that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker" (1987:65). Goffman, however, writes about the *incidents* or *events* which threaten face but does not

insist that certain acts are intrinsically face-threatening. In Goffman's approach it is not the *acts* in themselves which are face-threatening, but rather that if a social actor fails to maintain the line assumed during a particular encounter, that encounter results in the *incident* or *event* which threatens face.

In the above account of face-work, I find an interesting similarity to Bourdieu's theory of practice. The habitual aspects of face-saving acts in Goffman's writing, remind us of Bourdieu's *habitus*. B&L tried to explain politeness as being generated rational cognitive decisions made by rational actors, but Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* and what Goffman refers to as 'habitual practices' both suggest that face-saving acts are more of a habitual nature, which they have acquired as embodied practice through socialisation or through having performed various roles in social drama.

I find another similarity between Goffman and Bourdieu in the following passage, where Goffman writes :

> The members of every social circle may be expected to have some knowledge of face-work and some experience in its use. In our society, this kind of capacity is sometimes called tact, savoir-faire, diplomacy, or social skill. Variation in social skill pertains more to the efficacy of face-work than to the frequency of its application, for almost all acts involving others are modified, prescriptively or proscriptively, by consideration of face. (1967:13.)

It is noteworthy here that Goffman argues that "almost all acts involving others are modified, prescriptively or proscriptively, by consideration of face (1967:13)". This idea is very similar to Bourdieu's censorship and his idea that all utterances are euphemised to a certain extent. Bourdieu discusses 'tact' in terms of *euphemisation* or *censorship*. (See *Ch.4* 3.2.(c)) Goffman also claims that the capacity to *modify* our acts or utterances by consideration of face is 'tact', 'savoir-faire', 'diplomacy' or 'social skill'. Thus Goffman and Bourdieu alike both argue that tact or politeness is a kind of modification

or euphemisation, applied in all acts and utterances.[151] However, unlike B&L's theory, in which politeness is understood to be operative only when a person performs face-threatening acts (See *Ch.4* 3.2.(c), Bourdieu and Goffman have argued convincingly that politeness is operative in all acts and utterances.

3. Conclusion

As Bourdieu's theory of practice, which was my first thinking tool for exploring an alternative approach to politeness, had a limited role for agency and little attention was paid to the social psychological aspects of human action, in this chapter, I turned to Goffman, who made a careful study of the participants in interaction, hoping that Goffman's sociology of everyday social interaction would complement Bourdieu's theory of practice. In concluding this chapter, I will first summarise Goffman's major contribution to politeness studies (in **3.1.**) and then I will show how Bourdieu and Goffman complemented each other in constructing a possible alternative approach to politeness (in **3.2.**)

3.1. Goffman's contribution to politeness studies

Goffman's sociology provided a model of self, which is very different from B&L's Model Person. Goffman saw self as being socially constructed. Goffman's self is very much concerned with its own social value in social interaction. Individuals cannot claim social value by themselves but it must be granted by others. Goffman's notion of 'face' is qualitatively different from the face-want that individuals want to claim just for their own benefit. Participants in interaction are emotionally concerned with their own face as well as that of other participants. The notion of 'face' assumes intersubjectivity.

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151 Though both saw politeness as a kind of modification, I see the difference in focus between the two: Bourdieu focuses on euphemisation by the taking into consideration relative positions and market conditions, while Goffman focuses on modification of acts by consideration of face.

Goffman not only acknowledged that his sociology did not meet the orthodox methodological standards of modern sociology, but also was critical of the kind of sociology which attempted to mimic the natural sciences, which aims to establish a unifying universal principle. Goffman used three metaphors *drama*, *ritual* and *game* to elucidate the complex and enigmatic nature of social interaction. Goffman's approach is surprisingly *postmodern* for not having been motivated to meet those *modernist* theoretical demands characterised by 'rationality' and 'objectivity'.

In each metaphor, Goffman discussed moral obligations that participants in co-gathering must keep, which he described as 'standards', 'ground rules of a game' or 'traffic rules of interaction'. In his final speech manuscript in 1982, Goffman used the term 'interaction order' to culminate in what he had observed in his lifetime study of face-to-face interaction. Maintaining the 'interaction order' is sometimes expressed as performing an anticipated role, being a good team-mate in performance, upholding dramaturgical loyalty, and at other times performing ritual requirements in the interaction ritual. The 'interaction order' incorporates 'moral obligations' but at the same time involves 'strategic play in the game'. I argued that politeness is best understood as commitment to the 'interaction order' in Goffman's sociology.

3.2. How Bourdieu and Goffman complement each other

After employing Bourdieu's and Goffman's sociology, I have discovered that they have enough common ground to be more or less compatible with each other. In this section, I will show how they complement each other. Both Bourdieu and Goffman elucidated politeness successfully in the interplay between structure and agency although they approached politeness from different angles. Bourdieu argued that all utterances are in some way a 'compromise' of what an individual wants to say and what

he/she is able to or allowed to say in the particular *field*. Bourdieu's explanation of politeness as euphemisation or censorship may appear to be a kind of structural constraint upon individuals, but the individuals often do not feel it as a constraint, because through socialisation, structure had been internalised and embodied in the individual as *habitus*, "the system of structured, structuring dispositions (Bourdieu 1990b:52)".

Goffman saw politeness as an individual's commitment to the interaction order. Social actors, in maintaining the interaction order, must perform various roles as situations require in the *drama* and meet various *ritual* requirements in interaction, while at the same time they must make strategic moves in a *game*. Goffman argued that commitment to the interaction order is 'moral obligation', which may appear to be society's constraint upon individuals. The individual cannot afford not to maintain the interaction order, because the self is ultimately a product of social interaction and an individual's self-image depends upon how others evaluate him/her based on maintaining his line during social interaction. This means that politeness is not an option but an absolute requirement for anyone who wishes to maintain his/her self-image. Goffman, however, also stressed that commitment to the interaction order becomes the 'game' that social actors play (which allows agency-centred aspect of social interaction), and that they play this game seriously and strategically because their social self and public self-image are at stake.

Although Bourdieu and Goffman are not particularly identified as *postmodern* researchers, both their sociologies exhibit some characteristics which go beyond modern social science. First, neither Bourdieu and Goffman aimed to establish any universal unifying principle, which has been the main motivation for *modernist* researchers. Instead Bourdieu and Goffman both accommodated plural notions of politeness.

Bourdieu, who elucidated politeness as euphemisation and self-censorship operative in utterance production through *habitus*, recognised that a different sense of appropriateness would be expected depending upon the *field* or positions of social actors in the *field*. Bourdieu also acknowledged that as individuals go through different types of socialisation, *habitus*, the structured disposition would also vary. Inevitably there would be different perceptions of what is polite by different people. Even among individuals who have grown up in the same society or community, depending upon the capital that a person has and the particular position that he/she holds in the particular *field*, different self-censorship or euphemisation might be expected. Similarly, Goffman also pointed out that there are different expectations with regards to the ways that individuals maintain the interaction order: social actors are expected to act out different selves for different social scenes and use different repertoires in performing face-work. This practical knowledge and these skills have been acquired through actual experience of various social scenes. As I argued earlier, politeness is 'the commitment to the interaction order' that individuals are expected to maintain. Goffman also accommodated plural notions of politeness as he acknowledged that there is cultural or sub-cultural variability in the way they maintain this order, because the ground rules of social interaction vary.

Secondly, *modernist* thinkers are convinced that the modern subject's rational dispassionate mind is the key to objective truth and thus placed rationality at the centre of their theorisation. Consequently, body is not considered to be a main theoretical concern in modern social science. Both Bourdieu and Goffman, however, did not insist upon the supremacy of mind over body, but rightly recognised and recovered the importance of body in their sociology. Bourdieu showed how the relation to body is a fundamental dimension of the *habitus.* Bourdieu's *habitus* also shows his notion of *doxa*

also suggesting that practical sense cannot be reduced to cognition. which is the taken-for-granted, preconscious understanding of the world – "[p]ractical sense, social necessity turned into nature, converted into motor schemes and body automatisms, is what causes practices, in and through what makes them obscure to the eyes of their producers, to be *sensible*, that is, informed by a common sense. (Bourdieu 1990b:68-69)". Whatever the society into which individuals are socialised, the *habitus* they have acquired has becomes *doxa*, a taken-for-granted, preconscious understanding of the world. The perception of politeness is also *doxa*, felt-reality, practical sense, which does not separate body and mind. Goffman also recognised that social interaction involves embodied practical knowledge. Goffman considers that speech behaviour and bodily behaviour are inseparable from each other, as he writes: "utterances must be presented with an overlay of functional gestures" (Goffman 1964:136) Encounter in co-gathering is embodied engagement. Individuals have acquired such complex practical ways of how to maintain the interaction order through socialisation, which Goffman explained in his three metaphors. Thus such practical knowledge of maintaining the interaction order involves corporeal aspects as well as cognitive ones, and it is only through experiencing various social scenes, that social actors acquire such practical embodied knowledge.

Thirdly, while modernist social scientists endeavoured to establish a 'theory' from which 'practice' can be explained as its application or execution, Bourdieu and Goffman attempted to elucidate 'practice' itself through ethnographic fieldwork. It was through reflection on ethnographic field data, that Bourdieu proposed his 'theory of practice' as a thinking tool that enables one to understand and deal with practical problems. Bourdieu commented that the various concepts that he used are a kind of 'shorthand' within the research procedure (See *Ch. 4* 2.1.), which De Certeau (1998:58)

called a 'theoretical metaphor'. Goffman also elucidated the somewhat enigmatic multi-faceted nature of social interaction through his three marvellous metaphors, *drama, ritual,* and *game* Goffman observed, analysed and elucidated the orderliness in social interaction, i.e. the interaction order, but he did not see this orderliness "as manifestation of the structure of kinship or power relationships" (Burns 1992:33) as structuralists did. Through ethnographic fieldwork, Goffman genuinely observed that there is orderliness in everyday social behaviour, which he called the 'interaction order' and he endeavoured to elucidated its multi-faceted nature through his three metaphors.

Fourthly and finally, both Bourdieu and Goffman recognised that what seems to be accepted as universal or legitimised as normal is often closely related to power. Bourdieu argued that what is felt to be normal has very much to do with what has been legitimised as natural, which is usually favourable to the dominant class in that society. Goffman also recognized that such legitimised power (hegemony) exist in social life. He maintains that individuals must maintain the line, but the line is of a legitimate institutionalized kind, thus they are expected to maintain the line in a way expected within the particular society/community (See 2.1.(b)., this chapter). As the self-image is directly linked to how one maintains the line, individuals have no choice but consent to this hegemonic reality.[152] Similarly, Bourdieu argued that what is claimed as universal in academia is often a product of the *symbolic power* of scientific discourse which exercises a quasi-divine power over the vision of the world (Bourdieu 1991:227-8) (cf. *Ch.4* 5.1.(b).) and is a reflection of what is considered as being normal within the dominant Western academic community.[153]

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[152] Social interaction is centred around so-called 'normal' people and yet such hegemony is always there but it is not so obvious unless people who do not fit into that category come into the picture. In *Stigma* (1963), Goffman explored the situation of those persons who are unable to conform to standards that society calls 'normal'.

[153] Lyotard (1984) also pointed out that what has been considered to be a grand narrative in modernist academia is the legitimation of scientific discourse which is assumed to be the only acceptable discourse in the language game of the modern academic community.

Having gained insights from Bourdieu and Goffman, in the final chapter (**Conclusion**), I ask finally whether politeness studies are still viable as an academic discipline. Then I will make epistemological explorations towards reconstructing a viable 'post-modern' approach to politeness. At this point, as the third thinking tool, I will bring in Hans-Georg Gadamer, a German philosopher who has explored the possibility of a more flexible social science which recovers the *phronesis* (practical wisdom) described in Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics.*

Conclusion: Looking into the future

0. Introduction

In Part I of this thesis, I argued that Lakoff, Leech, and B&L all endeavoured to establish universal principles of politeness, because they built their theories upon the modernist assumption that there are standards of rationality, which are genuinely universal and not subject to historical or temporal change. The quest for such universal principles has been a main concern within modern academia, which Bernstein (1983) termed Cartesian Anxiety (See *Ch. 3* 1.1.). The outcome of such modernist theory construction were various dualisms – objectivism/subjectivism, structure/agency, theory/practice, and body/mind (See *Ch. 3* 3.(a).). In Part II of the thesis, I explored alternative ways of elucidating politeness employing Bourdieu and Goffman as 'thinking tools'. Both exemplified an alternative social science unconstrained by the tenets of modernist theory construction.

Drawing from them, in this concluding chapter, I will offer epistemological suggestions for reconstructing some viable *postmodern* approaches to politeness. **Section 1** delineates the kind of social science we need for *postmodern* approaches to politeness. **Section 2** makes an attempt to touch upon one unresolved but essential issue for *postmodern* approaches to politeness, that is, the evaluation of politeness by the Hearer. **Section 3** considers the agenda for politeness studies in the future. **Section 4** provides a final summing up.

1.Towards *postmodern* approaches to politeness

Following *postmodern* challenges to modernist assumptions in many social scientific

disciplines, I ask a fundamental question for politeness studies. Can politeness be analysed using a framework based on scientific rationality? In constructing viable *postmodern* politeness studies, my contention is that we must overcome our Cartesian Anxiety (Bernstein 1983:16, 18, 29) in order to make an epistemological exploration towards a more open and flexible social science not driven by modernist thinking.

For this task, I turn to Hans-Georg Gadamer, a German philosopher, as my third and final thinking tool. The reason why I turn to Gadamer as my third thinking tool is that Gadamer applied himself to this very problem. He was critical of modern social sciences distorted by Cartesianism and argued that a proper understanding of the whole range of social disciplines requires us to recognise an essential hermeneutical dimension. Gadamer (1900-2002) was a German philosopher, best known for his magnum opus *Truth and Method* (1960, first English translation in 1975), and he was highly influenced by his teacher, Martin Heidegger, in his philosophical thinking. Gadamer discussed the 'understanding' of art, written literature, Biblical, philosophical or legal texts in his writings, but his hermeneutics can be extended to enlighten interpretive activity more widely. Lawn (2006:9) writes:

> …hermeneutics is involved in all acts of understanding….what happens when we interpret a text is what happens when we seek to understand anything in our cultural social world be it the meaning of life or the more mundane interpretation of everyday objects, ideas and situations… interpretation is not a special activity confined to the unravelling of difficult texts, it is an aspect of all forms of human understanding.

In fact, Gadamer's philosophic hermeneutics[154] has already brought about a new hermeneutical turn in the social sciences. (e.g. Gadamer 1987, Heller 1989, Rabinow & Sullivan 1987a, 1987b).

Gadamer argues that human sciences deal with practical wisdom (*phronesis*), which is qualitatively different from scientific knowledge. In **1.1.**, I will delineate

154 "The Greek term *hermêneuein*, meaning to interpret, is the root from which the word hermeneutics is derived."(Lawn 2006:45)

phronesis-oriented social science. In **1.2.**, I will discuss Gadamer's 'hermeneutical understanding' which is essential to *phronesis*-oriented social science. Both provide epistemological guides for *postmodern* approaches to politeness. Then in **1.3.**, I will show how Gadamer's hermeneutics and *phronesis*-oriented social science are both compatible with Bourdieu and Goffman and goes further, providing what these authors could not for *postmodern* approaches to politeness.

1.1. *Phronesis*-oriented social science

Before exploring alternative social science, I will highlight the disparity between the Anglo-American and the German understanding of the nature of social science. In the Anglo-American tradition, intellectual disciplines fall into a trichotomy of natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, while on the European Continent, they are categorised into a dichotomy between *Naturwissenschaften* (natural sciences) and *Geisteswissenschaften* (human sciences) (Bernstein 1983:35). Bernstein points out that

> [i]n the main Anglo-American tradition – at least until recently – the overwhelming bias has been to think of social sciences as *natural sciences* concerning individuals in their social relations. The assumption has been that the social sciences differ in the [sic] degree and not in kind from the natural sciences and that ideally the methods and standards appropriate to the natural sciences can be extended by analogy to the social sciences. (ibid.)

Perhaps the scientific conceptualisation of politeness in modern politeness studies is partly due to this classification of social science as similar in kind to the natural sciences. However, in the German tradition, from which Gadamer comes, "there has been a much greater tendency to think of the social disciplines as forms of *Geisteswissenchaften* sharing essential characteristics with the humanistic disciplines" (ibid.), which include philosophy, psychology, history, sociology etc. It is my contention that any *postmodern* approaches to politeness should be placed within a broader category of *Geisteswissenschaften* (human sciences), which allows a humanities element.

Even in Germany, however, human sciences suffer from an inferiority complex in comparison with the natural sciences, and there have been attempts to elevate human sciences to the standard of natural sciences. (e.g. Dilthey; See 1.2. for further discussion). But Gadamer refused such attempts and defended human sciences as disciplines fundamentally different. Gadamer (2004:310-321) resorted to Aristotle's practical philosophy to support his argument. In *The Nicomachean Ethics* Book VI, Aristotle identified different qualities or intellectual virtues related to truth, *episteme*, *phronesis* and *techne*. *Episteme* may be translated as 'scientific knowledge'. Aristotle himself described the nature of *episteme* as follows:

> We all conceive that a thing that we know scientifically cannot vary; when a thing that can vary is beyond the range of our observation....An object of scientific knowledge....is eternal, for everything existing of absolute necessity is eternal.... a man knows a thing scientifically, when he possesses a conviction arrived at in a certain way, and when the first principles on which that conviction rest are known to him with certainty. (Aristotle 1996:147-148; 1139b)

Flyvbjerg points out that *episteme* corresponds to 'the modern scientific ideal' which has become dominant in modernist academia.

> *Episteme* corresponds to the modern scientific ideal as expressed in natural science. In Socrates and Plato, and subsequently in the Enlightenment tradition, this scientific ideal became dominant. The ideal has come close to being the only legitimate view of what constitutes genuine science, such that even intellectual activities like social science, which are not and probably never can be scientific in this sense, have found themselves compelled to strive for and legitimate themselves in terms of this Enlightenment ideal. (Flyvbjerg 2001:56)

Gadamer argues that human sciences, unlike natural science built upon *episteme*, stand closer to *phronesis*, another of Aristotle's intellectual virtues. Gadamer (2004:312) writes:

> ...the distinction that Aristotle makes between moral knowledge (phronesis) and theoretical knowledge (episteme) is a simple one, especially when we remember that science, for the Greeks, is represented by the model of mathematics, a knowledge of what is unchangeable, a

> knowledge that depends on proof and that can therefore be learned by anybody. A hermeneutics of the human science certainly has nothing to learn from mathematical as distinguished from moral knowledge. The human sciences stand closer to moral knowledge than to that kind of "theoretical" knowledge. They are "moral sciences." Their object is man and what he knows of himself as an acting being. And this kind of knowledge of himself does not seek to establish what is. An active being, rather, is concerned with what is not always the same but can be different. In it he can discover the point at which he has to act. The purpose of his knowledge is to govern his *action.* [emphasis in the original]

Aristotle's *phronesis* may be translated as 'prudence', 'practical wisdom' or sometimes 'moral knowledge'. *Phronesis* is "commonly understood to mean especially that kind of wisdom which is concerned with oneself, the individual" (Aristotle 1996:152; 1141b). The conduct of one's own affairs requires consideration. 'Prudent' persons are those who are wise in their own affairs (ibid.1996:153; 1141b). *Phronesis* "stands opposite to intelligence…prudence [phronesis] deals with the ultimate particular thing, which cannot be apprehended by scientific knowledge, but only by perception (ibid. 154; 1142a)". Flyvbjerg (2001:57) summarises *phronesis* as follows:

> The person possessing practical wisdom (*phronesis*) has knowledge of how to behave in each particular circumstance that can never be equated with or reduced to knowledge of general truths. *Phronesis* is a sense of the ethically practical rather than a kind of science….in Aristotle's original description of *phronesis*, one might get the impression that *phronesis* and the choice it involves in concrete circumstances are always good….Choice must be deemed good (or bad) in relation to certain values and interests in order for good and bad to have meaning.

He further writes:

> *Phronesis* thus concerns the analysis of values – "things that are good or bad for man" – as a point of departure for action. *Phronesis* is that intellectual activity most relevant to praxis. It focuses on what is variable, on that which cannot be encapsulated by universal rules, on specific cases. *Phronesis* requires an interaction between the general and the concrete; it requires consideration, judgement, and choice. More than anything, *phronesis* requires *experience*. (ibid.)

Bernstein (1983:146) contrasts *episteme* and *phronesis*: *episteme* (scientific knowledge) is the "knowledge of what is universal, of what exists invariably, and takes the form of

scientific demonstration", whereas *phronesis* is "the form of reasoning appropriate to *praxis*, which deals with what is variable and always involves a mediation between the universal and the particular that requires deliberation and choice" (ibid.).

Gadamer also distinguishes *phronesis* (moral knowledge) from *techne* (technical knowledge).

> We learn a techne and can also forget it. But we do not learn moral knowledge, nor can we forget it. We do not stand over against it, as if it were something that we can acquire or not, as we can choose to acquire an objective skill, a techne. Rather we are always already in the situation of having to act…and hence we must already possess and be able to apply moral knowledge. (Gadamer 2004:315)

Gadamer (2004:318) points out that *techne* is "particular and serves particular ends" whereas *phronesis* "has no merely particular ends but pertains to right living in general" and "always requires self deliberation." (ibid.) *Phronesis* "can never be knowable in advance like knowledge that can be taught." (ibid.) *Phronesis*, then, is the "knowledge that has to respond to the demands of the situation of the moment" (ibid. 319). Thus "a knowledge of the particular situation…is a necessary supplement to moral knowledge" (ibid. 319).[155]

As discussed earlier, modern scholars, haunted by Cartesian Anxiety, are led to believe that acceptable academic enterprise has to be rational and scientific, i.e. *episteme*-based. Similarly, in the 1970s when politeness studies first emerged as a new field, modern politeness theorists struggled to explain politeness within an *episteme*-based framework, i.e. to conceptualise politeness as though it was science or

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[155] Another characteristic of *phronesis* that Gadamer also points out is that *phronesis*, unlike *techne*, requires an understanding of other human beings. Aristotle calls it *synesis,* i.e. 'sympathetic understanding' or 'fellow-feeling'. Gadamer (1975) writes: "It appears in the fact of concern, not about myself, but about the other person. Thus it is a mode of moral judgement… The question here, then, is not of a general kind of knowledge, but of its specification at a particular moment. This knowledge also is not in any sense technical knowledge…. The person with understanding does not know and just as one who stands apart and unaffected; but rather, as one united by a specific bond with the other, he thinks with the other and undergoes the situation with him" (Gadamer 1975 quoted in Bernstein 1983:147). (I used the different translation of Gadamer's work because the meaning is clearer in this version). Thus *Phronesis* has a practical communal character. Someone with understanding is prepared to consider the particular situation of the other person. *Techne* does not have such character.

to establish second-order politeness (politeness2). However, as I observed, politeness probably has never been and will never be something which can be reduced to knowledge of general truth (*episteme*) built on timeless, eternal, first principles. After all, politeness must have been discussed as a kind of 'practical wisdom' by ordinary people before politeness studies emerged as a new scientific field back in the 1970s. My proposal for a *postmodern* approach to politeness, then, is to redeem *phronesis* into the social sciences, in our case, into the field of politeness studies, as Gadamer urged.

Flyvbjerg (2001:61) also identifies the problems in modern social science as having arisen because we have been failing to recognise the difference between *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*.

> Today's researchers seldom make explicit which one of these three roles they are practicing. The whole enterprise is simply called "science", even though we are dealing with quite different activities. It is often the case that these activities are rationalized as being *episteme* even though they are actually *techne* or *phronesis*.

Flyvbjerg (2001:60) argues that "every well-functioning society was dependent on the effective functioning of all three intellectual virtues – *episteme*, *techne*, and *phronesis* – in, respectively, science, crafts and ethics." Aristotle emphasized that *phronesis* is crucial among them. "If a man have the one virtue of prudence [*phronesis*] he will also have all the moral virtues together with it (Aristotle 1996:161; 1144b). Flyvbjerg's proposal for alternative social sciences was also that we should redeem *phronesis* into these disciplines as it had relied upon *episteme* for a long time, stating that "it is not in their role as *episteme* that one can argue for the value of the social sciences. In the domain where the natural sciences have been strongest – production of theories that can explain and predict accurately – social sciences have been weakest" (2001:61). He maintains that "in their role as *phronesis*, the social sciences are strongest where the natural sciences are weakest".

The problem is that we have been imbued with this *episteme*-oriented approach

for so long that we do not even know where and how to begin this *phronesis*-oriented approach to politeness as an academic field of study. However, when we reflect upon our daily lives, we have been exercising *phronesis* (practical wisdom) all along in different areas of our lives. In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer delineates 'hermeneutical understanding', which is essentially *phronesis*-oriented, as the essential mode of understanding central to the human sciences. Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics guides us further in *phronesis*-oriented social science.

1.2. Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics

Gadamer presented his position regarding human sciences in a debate against Dilthey who employed the 'method' of hermeneutics as the way to make human sciences more credible and raise them to a standard equal to natural sciences. Gadamer refuted Dilthey based on his ontological understanding of our existence, which became the foundation of his philosophical hermeneutics. I will first discuss Gadamer's argument in this debate and then introduce his hermeneutical understanding, which has inspired many social science disciplines and opened new possibilities for social science. Gadamer's hermeneutics provides further insights in my exploration of *postmodern* approaches to politeness.

(a). Gadamer against Dilthey on human sciences

Hermeneutics is best known as a field of study of the general principles of Biblical interpretation. With the emergence of German romanticism and idealism, hermeneutics extended its field and turned philosophical. This shift was initiated by Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, and others. Hermeneutics has now been extended from its original use in describing the interpretation of texts to the wider interpretation of all human acts and products including history and human life. (Inwood 2004:268) Gadamer's hermeneutics expressed in his *Truth and Method* (1960; English trans. 1975)

was partly a response to Dilthey's hermeneutics.

Dilthey (1833-1911) began to find in hermeneutics a foundation for *Geisteswissenschaften* (human sciences). Considering that human sciences suffered from an inferiority complex in comparison with the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*), Dilthey attempted to save human sciences by means of a hermeneutic 'method'. The fundamental problem for Dilthey was historicity or historical consciousness (Grondin 2003:65-66). Dilthey posed the problem of historical consciousness in methodological terms: historicity is so invasive that only a rigorous methodology is able to contain its effects. He claimed that because we are aware of this historicity, we are able, to a certain extent, to get away from its influence and study history objectively. In other words, Dilthey claimed that by adopting a reflective distant attitude toward historicity, we are not only conscious but self-conscious, we can achieve some measure of historical objectivity (Weinsheimer 1985:153). Thus Dilthey attempted to ground the objectivity of interpretation upon the transcendence of the interpreter's present cultural and historical situation. Put in different words, Dilthey tried to elevate human sciences back onto an Enlightenment standard through his hermeneutical method. But in the process of doing this, Dilthey implicitly accepted the Cartesian ideal of 'Method' and 'objective knowledge'.

Gadamer, on the other hand, questioned whether this reflexive awareness of history can indeed succeed in objectifying, to the full extent, its historical determination. Gadamer claimed that 'historical consciousness' is more a mode of 'being' than 'knowledge' (Grondin 2003:66-68). This claim was influenced by Heidegger's notion of *Dasein*, which is sometimes translated as "Being-there" or "Being-here" (*Da* means "here" or "there", *Sein* is "to be"). Heidegger used the concept of *Dasein* to uncover the primal nature of "Being" (Sein), ontological being. *Dasein* is always a being engaged in the world. The fundamental mode of being is a coherence of being-in-the-world, which

cannot be subsumed under subjectivity or objectivity. In Heidegger's philosophy, understanding cannot be separated from one's existence as being-in-the-world. Ramberg & Gjesdal (2007) explain this as follows:

> Understanding, in Heidegger's account, is neither a method of reading nor the outcome of a willed and carefully conducted procedure of critical reflection. It is not something we consciously do or fail to do, but something we are. Understanding is a mode of being, and as such it is characteristic of human being, of Dasein. The pre-reflective way in which Dasein inhabits the world is itself of a hermeneutic nature.

Gadamer's notion of understanding is built on this Heideggerian notion of 'understanding'. For, Gadamer, "understanding always implies a preunderstanding which is…prefigured by the determinate tradition in which the interpreter lives and that shapes his prejudices" (Gadamer1987:87). Gadamer refuted Dilthey as follows:

> Self-reflection and autobiography – Dilthey's starting point – are not primary and are therefore not an adequate basis for the hermeneutical problem, because through them history is made private once more. In fact history does not belong to us; we belong to it. Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society, and state in which we live… (Gadamer 2004:278)

Thus Gadamer criticised Dilthey's effort to assert the 'objectivity' of the human sciences in an attempt to measure up to natural science by a hermeneutic method. Gadamer argues that we are part of history, and that it is impossible to discover a viewpoint of a-historical objectivity but instead he sees historicity as an essential element in human sciences. Gadamer proposed here a different kind of knowledge for human sciences, which recovers the historicity and tradition which had been eliminated by Cartesianism. For Gadamer, hermeneutics is not restricted to the problem of Method in human sciences as Dilthey argues. It is given an ontological turn; "understanding, for Gadamer is a primordial mode of our being in the world" (Bernstein 1983:34). Bernstein (1983:118) also comments that

> Gadamer's critique of Cartesianism....is radical in the sense of "getting at the roots." Gadamer does not merely raise objections about the epistemological, methodological, or even the metaphysical claims of Cartesianism. The basis of his critique is ontological; he thinks that Cartesianism is based on a misunderstanding of being and in particular upon a misunderstanding of our being-in-the-world.

Descartes made the fundamental philosophical assumption that *res cogitans* (the thinking being, i.e. the rational subject) is distinct from *res extensa* (the physical work or world) (See *Ch.3* 1.1). This led to one of the modernist assumptions that the modern knower, who is an 'autonomous rational subject', claims to have access to neutral dispassionate knowledge about the world from a vantage point outside the flux of history. Gadamer has challenged this foundation of modernism through his understanding of our existence as 'being-in-the-world'.

Gadamer's view of our existence as being-in-the-world and the ontological element in our understanding is very significant for politeness studies. It proposes that all the participants in social interaction are capable of perceiving only from within their own historical and hermeneutical situations. Bourdieu also embedded historicity as an essential element of his theory of practice. I will argue that historicity must be one important element to consider in our *postmodern* approaches to politeness, but before discussing this further, I will expound Gadamer's notion of 'understanding'.

(b). Gadamer's hermeneutical 'understanding'

In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer elucidated hermeneutical understanding, "the entirely different type of knowledge and truth from that which is yielded by Method and science" (Bernstein 1983:168). Grondin (2002:36) points out that 'understanding' or 'interpretation' in Gadamer carries many meanings but all point to one phenomenon, i.e., understanding is "the original form of the realization of our existence", which originates in Heidegger's philosophy[156]. Thus, as discussed earlier, understanding also has an

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156 Heidegger claims in *Being and Time* (1962) that knowledge of the world cannot be detached from

ontological orientation. In other words, our ontological being is always placed within our understanding. What Gadamer argues is a "primary consciousness of the hermeneutical *situation*" (2004:301). "The very idea of a situation means that we are not standing outside of it and hence are unable to have any objective knowledge of it" (ibid.). Gadamer criticises the attempt to establish hermeneutics on scientific methodology. Instead he argues that the task of hermeneutics is "not to develop a procedure of interpretation but to clarify what are the conditions in which understanding takes place" (ibid. 295)

Gadamer characterises understanding as an event or happening of being, which is essential to his hermeneutical understanding. To grasp this kind of ontological nature of understanding, Gadamer's discussion on the understanding of a work of art is helpful. A work of art is not thought of as a self-contained and self-enclosed object that stands over against the spectators, who as subjects, must purify themselves in order to achieve understanding of the work of art. But rather, there is a dynamic interaction or transaction between the work of art and the spectator who shares in it. Gadamer explains the complex nature of hermeneutical understanding from different angles just as Goffman used different metaphors to explain social interaction.

First, Gadamer claims that "understanding is, essentially, a historically effected event" (2004:299)[157]. In other words, "in all understanding whether we are expressly aware of it or not, the efficacy of history is at work" (2004:300). Gadamer severely criticised Enlightenment thinking which discredited prejudice. Gadamer argues that historicity is part of human existence and rehabilitates prejudices as necessary conditions of understanding.

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being in the world. Human existence is being-there and being-in-the-world. Therefore it cannot transcend the world to become a pure consciousness. As long as we are historical beings, history cannot be transcended. Understanding is not an activity of the conscious subject, which can be independent of our historical existence but a projection of our existence as being-there. (Weinsheimer 1985:161-2)

[157] Hermeneutical 'consciousness' is the mode of being that is conscious of its own historical 'being effected', which is called 'historically-effected consciousness' (*wirkungsgeschictliches Bewußtsein*)

This leads to the second point: Gadamer claims that our 'prejudices' are conditions of understanding. Understanding involves "neither 'neutrality' with respect to content nor the extinction of one's self, but the foregrounding and appropriation of one's own fore-meanings and prejudices" (Gadamer 2004:271). By 'prejudice' Gadamer does not mean it in any negative sense. 'Prejudice' originally meant 'pre-judgment'. Judgement is not possible without pre-judgement. Gadamer insists that all human beings approach the world with certain pre-conceptions, prejudgements or prejudices. Gadamer points out that in the spirit of rationalism of the Enlightenment, prejudices were mistakenly discredited. (For fuller discussion on this, see Appendix 6-A). Gadamer turns around the Enlightenment argument that discredited prejudice and affirms 'prejudice' as a precondition for understanding.

> In adopting this principle, modern science is following the rule of Cartesian doubt, accepting nothing as certain that can in any way be doubted, and adopting the idea of method that follows from this rule. In our introductory observations we have already pointed out how difficult it is to harmonize the historical knowledge that helps to shape our historical consciousness with this ideal and how difficult it is, for that reason, to comprehend its true nature on the basis of the modern conception of method. This is the place to turn those negative statements into positive ones. The concept of "prejudice" is where we can start. (Gadamer 2004:273)

Thirdly, Gadamer rehabilitates tradition. Gadamer, opposing Enlightenment ideals which discredited tradition, claims that "there is no such unconditional antithesis between tradition and reason" (2004:282). He writes: "understanding in the human sciences shares one fundamental condition with the life of tradition" (ibid. 283). We, as historically situated beings, relate to the past and we cannot distance or free ourselves from tradition because we are always situated within some tradition or another. Thus "an element of tradition affects the human sciences despite the methodological purity of their procedures" (ibid.284).

Fourthly, Gadamer claims that understanding is inseparable from

application.[158] Gadamer (2004:306-307) claims that "understanding always involves something like applying the text to be understood to the interpreter's present situation". He also writes that "...the text, whether law or gospel, if it is to be understood properly – i.e., according to the claim it makes – must be understood at every moment, in every concrete situation, in a new different way. Understanding here is always application" (Gadamer 2004:307-8). Just as the discussion of the law can be understood in the light of the situation to which it is being applied in a particular case, it is when we can apply what we have read or heard to our particular situations or relate the matter to our individual concerns that we are able to have proper understanding. Thus understanding and experiencing in real situations as a situated being are closely related. In other words, we need our own hermeneutical situation to understand because we can only see from that position. Our own hermeneutical situation is what Gadamer calls a 'horizon', which leads to the next point.

Fifthly, Gadamer argues that understanding is a fusion of horizons. Gadamer explains the concept of 'horizon' as follows:

> Every finite present has its limitations. We define the concept of "situation" by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence essential to the concept of situation is the concept of *"horizon"*. The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point. (2004:301) [emphasis in the original]

Our "hermeneutical situation is determined by the prejudices we bring with us" (ibid. 304), so the horizon of a particular present is constituted by prejudices, our historical situated understanding and particular personal immediate concerns. Gadamer writes that this horizon is not fixed.

> ...the horizon of the present is continually in the process of being formed because we are continually having to test all our prejudices....this testing

158 Hermeneutics was traditionally subdivided into *subtilitas intelligenti* (understanding) and *subtilitas explicandi* (interpretation) and pietism added the third element, *subtilitas applicandi* (application). Subtilitas are "considered less as methods that we have at our disposal than as talents requiring particular finesse of mind" (Gadamer 2004:306). Gadamer declared there are no divisions. It is one.

> occurs in encountering the past and in understanding the tradition from which we come. Hence the horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past. There is no more an isolated horizon of the present in itself than there are historical horizons which have to be acquired. (Gadamer 2004:305)

Any horizon is limited and finite but is open.[159] Gadamer claims that understanding is a fusion of horizons. Lawn (2006:67) explains this: in the process of understanding, "a horizon can be brought into contact with another horizon. Instead of one obliterating the other a process of fusion takes place…this happens both down and across time, diachronically and synchronically". This engagement of horizons is an ongoing one and never achieves final completion. Gadamer writes:

> the historical movement of human life consists in the fact that it is never absolutely bound to any standpoint, and hence can never have a truly closed horizon. The horizon is, rather, something into which we move and that moves with us. Horizons change for a person who is moving. Thus the horizon of the past, out of which all human lives and which exists in the form of tradition, is always in motion. (Gadamer 2004:303)

This means that understanding or interpretation, as long as it is a fusion of these moving horizons, is inevitably always tentative, and open. Then the fusion of horizons is an ongoing and open dialogue. This is significantly different from modernist approaches characterised by Cartesian Anxiety, which try to find some stable Archimedean point. Modern politeness theorists also aimed to establish such a common universal ground for understanding politeness. Gadamer's fusion of horizons provides a basis for explaining understanding between people with different horizons.[160]

The sixth and final point is that Gadamer sees understanding as being circular and characterises understanding in terms of a hermeneutical circle. Cartesian thinking is linear, that is, it asserts that "every proposition must flow from a previous proposition until we reach an ultimate principle" (Grondin 2003:82). Gadamer, on the other hand,

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[159] Lefstein (2005:180) explains that "a horizon is both limiting – in the sense of blind spots outside the field of vision – and enabling, without it, thinking and understanding would not be possible."

[160] Gadamer's hermeneutics is used for a framework for understanding cross-cultural understanding. (e.g. Pillay 2002)

sees that understanding is circular. By being circular, he means that our understanding is always subject to revision. Though we are not free from our tradition and prejudices, as we have a dialogue with what we wish to understand, we engage in "the constant process that consists of the revisions of the anticipations of understanding in light of a better and more cogent understanding of the whole" (Grondin 2002:47).[161] Because interpretation is an ongoing dialogue with what we want to understand and constantly under revision, we cannot have definite absolute interpretations or understandings of something. For Gadamer, the process of understanding can never achieve finality, because we are always understanding and interpreting in light of our anticipatory prejudgements and prejudices, which are themselves changing in the course of history (Bernstein 1983:139). Thus Gadamer claims that to understand is always to understand differently (2004:296). This circularity is very significant in understanding the perception of politeness. In modernist approaches, researchers tried to establish something which is intrinsically polite, but we know that the same utterances can be polite or impolite depending upon differing situations. Here Gadamer goes further and claims that to understand is always to understand differently. If a person's understanding of politeness keeps on changing depending upon his/her hermeneutical situation and constantly under revision, this has a radical impact on the way we discuss the perception of politeness, because it means that we can never pin down precisely what is polite and what is not.

1.3. How Gadamer is compatible with and complementary to Bourdieu and Goffman

Gadamer's *phronesis*-oriented social science and his hermeneutical understanding are largely compatible with Bourdieu's and Goffman's sociology. It is my contention that

[161] Gadamer's hermeneutical circle differs from that of Heidegger. Heidegger's circle is the circle of understanding (*Auslegung*) and interpretation that guides it. Gadamer's circle is the circle of whole and the parts (Grondin 2002:49, 2003:82-83).

Gadamer's role is to provide the epistemological bases for Bourdieu's and Goffman's sociological approaches through his philosophical hermeneutics. The combination of the three theorists can partially help to overcome weaknesses they might have individually. In this section, I will show that what Bourdieu and Goffman have also discovered in their research can be explained well in terms of Gadamer's *phronesis*-oriented social science.

Bourdieu's 'theory of practice' deviates from an *episteme*-oriented approach in its recognition that practice generated by *habitus* cannot be separated from the historicity of the social actors, and this historicity is embedded in *habitus* as embodied history. Bourdieu also accommodates a plural sense of appropriateness, seeing this as dependent upon a *field* and on the positions that individuals occupy in the *field*. And just as *phronesis* is the knowledge that has to respond to the demand of the particular situation, Bourdieu is well aware that practical knowledge cannot be reduced to general truth or principles. In fact, Bourdieu explicitly acknowledges *phronesis* as one of the sources of 'practical knowledge' expressed in his notion of *habitus*.[162]

Goffman's elucidation of social interaction using his three metaphors is also very different from the *episteme*-based approach. Goffman does not explicitly mention *phronesis*, but his sociology involves *phronesis*. Rawls (1987) states that the issue of morality, particularly the notion of *moral obligation* remained a central underlying feature throughout Goffman's work: "Goffman seems to treat all obligations as moral obligations (Rawl 1987:144)". Treviño (2003:12) explains that "[b]y moral obligation, Goffman, in essence, means that the individual, as well as the group, has an inherent duty to respect the other, and vice-versa." People, who are wise in their own affairs, are

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[162] "Habitus being socially embodied, it is "at home" in the field it inhabits, and perceives it immediately as endowed with meaning and interest. The practical knowledge it procures may be described by analogy with Aristotle's *phronesis*..." (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:128). The other source Bourdieu mentions is *orthē doxa* of which Plato talks in Meno. Bourdieu calls it *doxa* in his theory of practice. It is the 'right opinion' 'falls right', in a sense without knowing how or why. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:128) (For discussion of *doxa*, see *Ch.4* 2.5.(a))

committed to maintain this moral obligation of the interaction order. At the heart of Goffman's elucidation of the interaction order, there lies *phronesis*, practical wisdom, which is also moral knowledge.

Through reflection upon their ethnographic fieldwork, both Bourdieu and Goffman have come to realise that the application of general principles would not explain actual practice and thus focused on the social practices themselves. Gadamer has helped us realise that *episteme* is not the only valid form of knowledge and that human sciences fundamentally deal with the different knowledge which deals with praxis, *phronesis*. Though we exercise such practical wisdom (*phroensis*) in our daily lives, we have not learnt to do that in our academic research. A split between theory and practice is a direct consequence of *episteme*-oriented social science as reflected in the distinction of politeness1 (the lay notion of politeness) and politeness2 (the scientific conceptualisation of politeness). When we reflect on various characteristics of *phronesis* shown in 1.1., we recognise that politeness was essentially a matter of practical wisdom in the first place: how one behaves appropriately in various situations. Exercising politeness not only involves the practical wisdom of how to behave in each particular circumstance but also requires moral judgement and deliberation. Recovering *phronesis* in our social science and making it *phronesis*-oriented, as Gadamer suggests, will allow us to operate in an arena where politeness1 and politeness2 are no longer held separate. Both Bourdieu and Goffman exemplify such *phronesis*-oriented approaches even though their approaches are very different from each other.

Goffman and Bourdieu also recognise one of the important elements in Gadamer's hermeneutical understanding, that is, the historical nature of our existence – we are historical beings and we are all part of the tradition we belong to. Goffman and Bourdieu acknowledge that a social actors' practical knowledge is deeply embedded in the tradition they are part of, as they have learned a particular way of doing things

through socialisation.

As briefly noted above, Bourdieu acknowledges historicity in our practice and tries to embed it into the notion of *habitus, Habitus* is similar to tradition in being handed down from generation to generation, and thus both infuse temporality or historicity into our perception and existence. They also both deal with the handing down of practical know-how rather than purely cognitive principles. We humans can never be free from tradition and *habitus* and our action/practice and perception are inevitably shaped by them. Tradition and *habitus* are intrinsic elements of our existence. Bourdieu's *habitus* and Gadamer's tradition both show that just as the person who interprets can never be free from *habitus* or tradition, *habitus* and tradition are always preconditions of understanding. Just as Bourdieu affirmed historicity embedded in our being, the sense of what is appropriate is deeply rooted in the historicity and traditions of all of us.

Gadamer's tradition, however, shows some differences from Bourdieu's *habitus*. The most significant one is that Gadamer does not adopt a critical stance towards tradition (Lawn 2006:128) and instead affirms its authority as 'legitimate prejudice', whereas Bourdieu argues that our roles within the social world are 'legitimized' by *symbolic power*. Gadamer is non-critical about tradition partly because "his conception of tradition is of one homogenous power and he neglects the point that within traditions there are in fact counter-traditions" (Lawn 2006:130). Bourdieu, on the contrary, recognises the heterogeneity of powers and argues that relationships between different powers pertaining to our culture have no necessary basis but have been arbitrarily constructed to reflect the interests of the dominant groups ("cultural arbitrary") (Webb, Schirato and Danaher 2002:x). On this point, Bourdieu's critical stance against tradition through *symbolic power* overcomes Gadamer's weakness in accepting tradition as a legitimate authority. Other differences I observe between

Gadamer's tradition and Bourdieu's *habitus* are as follows: though we are inseparable from tradition and *habitus*, the ways we relate to tradition and to *habitus* are different. Gadamer places us within a tradition and argues that we all exist within a particular tradition. Bourdieu, on the other hand, places *habitus* within us as part of our disposition. Bourdieu creates the notion of *habitus* in order to explain the production and reproduction of social structure across generations, whereas Gadamer does not seem to have any particular interest in social structure. But despite such differences between them, both Gadamer and Bourdieu affirm that we are historically situated beings and this will play significant part in our understanding.

Though not as explicitly as Bourdieu, Goffman also emphasises tradition and historicity in affirming that people have acquired different ways of maintaining the interaction order, for instance how to save face in different societies or sub-societies (See *Ch.5* 2.2.). Tradition constitutes our individual sense of how we ought to maintain the interaction order.

Bourdieu and Goffman share and exemplify the *phronesis*-oriented social science that Gadamer claims that social science ought to be. Gadamer is not only compatible with Bourdieu and Goffman but takes us further into *postmodern* approaches to politeness. Gadamer comes into his own on an issue that *postmodern* theorists see as a particularly important agenda for their studies – the role of the hearer, which I will discuss in the next section.

2. The Hearer's interpretation of politeness: a new focus

After three decades of endeavour to establish a scientific conceptualisation of politeness as part of modernist academic enterprise, *postmodern* politeness researchers – Eelen (2001), Watts (2003) and Mills (2003, 2004) – came back to the common sense realisation that (im)politeness is fundamentally a judgement of others' utterances and

that the evaluation of (im)politeness is disputable. They argued that elucidation of the Hearer's interpretation of politeness would become a main strand of *postmodern* politeness research. It is also my contention that this should be the main strand in the next generation of *postmodern* politeness research. The Hearer's different perceptions and interpretations of politeness could reveal heterogeneous criteria for politeness perceived by different individuals.

Modern politeness theories largely assumed that the Speaker's intention would be reconstructed by the Hearer unproblematically (Mills 2003:90) and thus focused on the Speaker's production of politeness. As a result, the Hearer's perspective has been neglected (Eelen 2001:104, 246). The Hearer, however, is not standing on neutral ground passively reconstructing the Speaker's intention. Even when the Speaker has no intention of causing offence, the Speaker may still be misunderstood by the Hearer and perceived to be making an impolite utterance. This means there is always bound to be the possibility of a discrepancy between the Speaker's intention and the Hearer's interpretation. As *postmodern* politeness researchers argued, what is (im)polite is ultimately dependent on the judgement of the Hearer, so that the Hearer's interpretation of politeness is of utmost importance in politeness studies. Unfortunately neither of the two theorists, Goffman and Bourdieu, whom I used as my thinking tools, really focused on the Hearer's interpretation. In **2.1.** and **2.2.**, I will explore what Goffman and Bourdieu had to say about the Hearer, even though the references may be sparse. Then in **2.3.**, I will return to my third thinking tool, Gadamer. Gadamer's notion of understanding discussed in 1.2 will move us forward in our elucidation of the Hearer's interpretation of politeness.

2.1. Goffman on the Hearer's interpretation

Goffman elucidates the individual's behaviour in social interaction in some detail but he

does not focus very extensively on the Hearer's evaluative activities in the writings on social interaction most relevant to this thesis. Only in a few places does Goffman discuss the evaluative activities of other participants but these are in contexts in which Goffman claims that the evaluation of other participants is fundamental to maintaining face and maintaining self image. Goffman discusses how individuals in co-present gatherings are committed to maintaining the interaction order. They cannot afford not to do so because their self-image or social self depends upon positive evaluation of them by other participants in the interaction. (See *Ch.5* 2.1.(a))

Goffman also claims that 'perceptiveness' is essential for employing one's repertoire of face-saving practices.

> If a person is to employ his repertoire of face-saving practices, obviously he must first become aware of the interpretation that others may have placed upon his acts and the interpretations that he ought perhaps to place upon theirs. In other word, he must exercise perceptiveness. But even if he is properly alive to symbolically conveyed judgement and is socially skilled, he must yet be willing to exercise his perceptiveness and his skill (1967:13-14).

Goffman's notion of 'perceptiveness' refers to the awareness of the interpretations that others may have placed upon his/her acts and the interpretations that he/she ought perhaps to place upon theirs. But he did not elaborate on this 'perceptiveness', nor does he discuss what criteria are operative in exercising perceptiveness. So Goffman did not explore the Hearer's interpretive practice in any detail.

2.2. Bourdieu on the Hearer's interpretation

Bourdieu discusses the Speaker's self-censorship when entering into the linguistic market in the production of oral and written discourse, but he does not seem to have directly discussed the Hearer's evaluative practice. In *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) and *Logic of Practice* (1990), *habitus* is mainly discussed in the context of a Speaker's production of utterance and it is the Speaker who censors and modifies

his/her own utterances to meet the demands of the linguistic market in production. But in *Reproduction: In Education, Society and Culture* (1977), he describes *habitus* as "a system of schemes of thought, perception, appreciation and action" (1977: 40), and so here *habitus* can perhaps be seen as providing criteria for interpreting another person's behaviour as well as giving criteria for self-censorship.

Bourdieu (1998:8) claims that *habitus* not only refers to 'generative principles of distinct and distinctive practices' but also 'classificatory schemes'. By 'classificatory schemes' he means, "principles of classification, principles of vision and division, different tastes. They make distinctions between what is good and what is bad, between what is right and what is wrong, between what is distinguished and what is vulgar, and so forth..." (1998:8.). In *Distinction* (1984a)[163], Bourdieu explores how *habitus* is related to judgment of taste. "Taste is an acquired disposition to 'differentiate' and 'appreciate'....to establish and mark differences by a process of distinction which is not (or not necessarily) a distinct knowledge...since it ensures recognition (in the ordinary sense) of the object without implying knowledge of the distinctive features which defines it" (1984a:466). Bourdieu claims that taste is related to a given place in social space.

> Taste is a practical mastery of distributions which makes it possible to sense or intuit what is likely (or unlikely) to befall – and therefore to befit – an individual occupying a given position in social space. It functions as a sort of social orientation, a 'sense of one's place' guiding the occupants of a given place in social space toward the social positions adjusted to their properties, and towards the practices or goods which befit the occupants of that position. It implies a practical anticipation of what the social meaning and value of the chosen practice or thing will probably be, given their distribution in social space and the practical knowledge the other agents have of the correspondence between goods and groups. (1984a:466)

[163]By 'Distinction' Bourdieu tries to argue that "what is commonly called distinction, that is, a certain quality of bearing and manners, most often considered innate (one speaks of *distinction naturelle* "natural refinement"), is nothing other than *difference*, a gap, a distinctive feature, in short, a *relational* property existing only in and through its relations with other properties. (Bourdieu 1998:6)" People from different social positions have each a different habitus. A sense of distinction (refinement) or aesthetic sense, then is only relative.

"To each class of positions there corresponds a class of habitus (or *tastes*) produced by the social conditioning associated with the corresponding condition and, through the mediation of habitus and its generative capability, a systematic set of goods and properties, which are united by an affinity of style" (Bourdieu 1998:8). *Habitus*, the sense of appropriateness (which can be seen a kind of aesthetic sense, or taste) has become embodied within us as a result of our socialization. So through *habitus,* the sense of what is polite may then also be understood as a kind of aesthetic sense, what is sensed as being tasteful or aesthetically pleasing. As habitus varies between one person or class and another, this aesthetic sense of courtesy also varies.

Bourdieu claims that there is *symbolic violence* in taste or in the aesthetic senses as well. Though there are many varieties of taste, the aesthetic sense of the dominant social group tends to be accepted as the legitimate sense in any given society. The dominant view as to what is appropriate is accepted as being natural. In other words, the tastes of the dominating class are considered to be the dominant aesthetic and legitimate distinction (elegance, courtesy). Bourdieu claims that taste or the capacity to discern aesthetic values is a social necessity, which becomes second nature ingrained in the individual person. So, for instance, it is difficult for the working class to embrace the bourgeois class sense of aesthetics, though it may be seen as legitimate distinction, because the working class *habitus* is inscribed in their bodies. Bourdieu writes:

> So nothing is further removed from an act of cognition, as conceived by the intellectualist tradition, than this sense of the social structure, which, as is so well put by the word *taste* – simultaneously 'the faculty of perceiving flavours' and 'the capacity to discern aesthetic values' – is social necessity made second nature, turned into muscular patterns and bodily automatisms. Everything takes place as if the social conditionings linked to a social condition tended to inscribe the relation to the social world in a lasting, generalized relation to one's own body, a way of bearing one's body, present it to others, moving it, making space for it, which gives the body its social physiognomy. Bodily hexis, a basic dimension of the sense of social orientation, is a practical way of experiencing and expressing one's own sense of social value. (Bourdieu 1984a:474)

So with *habitus* as 'classificatory schemes' or a 'system of schemes of thought, perception, appreciation and action', we can assume that *habitus* can be a sense of evaluation or interpretation of the others' actions or utterance.

But can *habitus* sufficiently explain the Hearer's evaluative practice? *Habitus* explains that our sense of what is appropriate in production and evaluation of other's production is deeply rooted in our socialisation and historicity. Thus according to Bourdieu, people with similar socialisation tend to acquire similar *habitus* or sense of what is appropriate. Difficulties in cross-cultural communication can be well explained by different *habitus*. However, in real situations, it is not uncommon that we experience some discomfiture or difficulties in social interaction even among people who have had very similar socialisation. Obviously there is individual variability with regard to the evaluation of what is polite and what is not polite. Such individual variability cannot be explained by *habitus*. After all, Bourdieu's *habitus* was created to explain the production and reproduction of social structure across generations, because he was interested in explaining how people generate similar behaviours appropriate to their social positions. As discussed in Chapter 4, *postmodern* politeness researchers, who needed some constructs to explain how individuals make various different judgements about politeness in terms of their own production and assessment of others' utterances misinterpreted one of Bourdieu's articles (See *Ch.4* 5.4) to support their 'discursive struggle over politeness1'. But Bourdieu does not help much in elucidating the Hearer's varying judgements. Besides individual variability, there is also variability within the same person's judgment. In other words, the same person might have different interpretation for the same utterance on different occasions. Contingency surrounding the Hearer is very complex. Bourdieu found no opportunity to explain such complexity.

2.3. Gadamer on the Hearer's interpretation

Gadamer's notion of understanding discussed in 1.2 illuminates how we can approach this crucial issue of the Hearer's interpretation.[164] His starting point is, as discussed above, the realization of our existence as being-in-the-world. From there, Gadamer argues that understanding is an event or happening of being. Because we are part of the world and part of our tradition, Gadamer claims that the task of hermeneutics was not to establish some 'method' or 'procedure' but only to elucidate the conditions in which understanding happens. Thus I can only endeavour to elucidate the complex hermeneutical conditions of the Hearer in which interpretation takes place. Just to recapitulate what Gadamer argues about hermeneutical understanding,

1) Understanding is, essentially, a historically effected event
2) Our 'prejudices' are conditions of understanding.
3) We are part of our tradition and thus tradition plays part in our understanding.
4) Understanding is inseparable from application.
*5) Understanding is a fusion of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung).
6) Understanding is circular.

Accepting these insights from Gadamer's hermeneutical understanding, I must abolish the common but problematic assumption that the Hearer passively reconstructs the Speaker's intention (See Mills 2003:90). It is incorrect in two ways. First it is incorrect because it gives the impression that understanding is considered to be some kind of psychological process. Gadamer argues rather that understanding must be conceived as a part of the process of the coming into being of meaning (Bernstein 1983:126). Secondly, it is incorrect because such a view of the Hearer ignores the Hearer's hermeneutical situation. The Hearer is not there just to reconstruct the Speaker's

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164 There appear to be some limits in using Gadamer's hermeneutical notion of 'understanding' to elucidate linguistic politeness, because they might at first seem to be somewhat remotely related. But what is involved in an interpreter's 'understanding' of written text seems to have much in common with comprehending a Hearer's act of 'understanding'.

intention, but the Hearer is part of his/her own tradition, as a historically situated being, and now situated in particular contexts in a particular time in history, with immediate particular concerns. Similarly, the Speaker belongs to his own tradition and is situated in particular historical contexts, with his/her particular agenda. Obviously the Speaker and the Hearer have their own horizons, which are different from each other.

The Hearer's interpretation of the Speaker's utterance inevitably involves some prejudices (prejudgement), which, Gadamer claims, are preconditions of understanding. Prejudices may come from some previous knowledge or experience. For instance, if the Hearer has had negative experiences of interacting with the Speaker on previous occasions, it would become part of his/her prejudgement of the Speaker's utterance. The Hearer's interpretation is also closely linked with the traditions of which he/she is part. Tradition includes historicity. As mentioned earlier, Bourdieu's *habitus* also stresses historicity through his notion of *habitus*, as embodied history. Bourdieu's notion of 'field' may explain the social actors' hermeneutical situation, to some extent. But Bourdieu discussed 'field' as an arena of struggle for control over valued resources, i.e. capital. Contingency surrounding the Hearer's interpretation arising from his/her (the Hearer's) ontological situatedness involves more than Bourdieu tried to capture in his theory of practice. After all, Bourdieu is weak in grasping what is changeable and agency role is limited in his approach. It is difficult to capture a hermeneutical situation which is moving and changing.

Gadamer's hermeneutical understanding illuminates various conditions in which the Hearer's interpretation takes place. Employing Gadamer's view of understanding inevitably assumes divergence between participants in any conversation. The fact that historicity, prejudice and tradition constitute our being, means that we cannot stand on some alleged Archimedean point that we all share as common ground for understanding. How can we, then, achieve mutual understanding if we assume such

heterogeneity? Possessing different kinds of tradition and prejudice, we as modernists, feared that there might be an uncrossable gulf of incommensurability. Gadamer argues that participants enter some kind of dialogic encounter with each other and understanding emerges as a fusion of horizons. Gadamer claims that while diverse traditions exist, they must necessarily overlap at some points, although their points of divergence and convergence are contingently governed. The Hearer's interpretation is a complex matter. There is always the possibility of misunderstanding because different 'horizons' 'prejudices' 'traditions' carried by different interlocutors all come into play during social interaction. Even an utterance with polite intentions could possibly be misunderstood as an impolite utterance. That is part of the very nature of social interaction.

So how can we do research on Hearers' differing interpretation, when there are such great degrees of contingency surrounding each Hearer? We no longer attempt to establish procedures of interpretation as in modernist approaches. Even if we know that our task is to elucidate the conditions in which the Hearer actually interprets some utterances, how can this be done in practical research? I believe that the key might be to focus on 'negatively eventful behaviour'. Goffman in *Behaviour in Public Places* (1963:7) claims that it is 'negatively eventful' behaviour "which gives rise to specific negative sanctions if not performed, but which, if it is performed, passes unperceived as an event". That is, politeness goes unnoticed until an utterance is perceived to be impolite. In fact, when we are upset about somebody's rude behaviour or utterance, we often want to tell friends or others. Sometimes such accounts come wrapped up in emotions. One possible research method I suggest is to collect accounts of such negatively eventful behaviour, by which people have felt offended or uneasy and experienced an utterance to be impolite. Such narrative approaches have been increasingly used in the interpretive branch of psychology (e.g. Sarbin 1986; Emerson &

Frosh 2004). Narratives of people who experienced impoliteness or negatively eventful behaviour, could be a useful source for this kind of research.[165]

3. Agenda for politeness studies in the future

In this final section of the thesis, I will consider an agenda for politeness studies in the future. For this task, I draw insights from several resources: 1) from some theorists who have contributed to *postmodern* epistemology that I mentioned in Ch.3 (i.e. Lyotard, Wittgenstein); 2) the three theorists I employed as my major thinking tools (i.e. Bourdieu, Goffman and Gadamer); 3) three theorists who have launched new *postmodern* paths in politeness studies (i.e. Eelen, Watts and Mills) and others who might help in our new passage into viable *postmodern* politeness research.

In **3.1.**, I will first present the agenda that *postmodern* politeness researchers, Eelen (2001), Mills (2003) and Watts (2003) have proposed for future politeness studies and then in **3.2.**, I will show how and to what extent my work overlaps with these *postmodern* theorists' agenda, and then present my own proposal for future politeness research drawing upon what I have gained through the project of theoretical reconsideration conducted in this dissertation.

3.1 Eelen's, Watts's and Mills's proposals for future politeness studies

What do these three *postmodern* politeness researchers propose for a new agenda? Eelen (2001:254-5) has suggested that because the emphasis is now on politeness1, research should involve actual investigation of ordinary people's conceptions of politeness. The questions he lists are "What kind of situations do they associate with politeness? Which

[165] I had a personal experience that someone at the lunch table asked a question which I perceived to be impolite. Later I collected accounts of the same event from a few friends who were also Hearers. Interestingly these accounts revealed that the Hearers' interpretation of the particular utterance as impolite were due not so much to the contextual matters in the actual situations in which the conversation was made as to their own historical hermeneutical situations as Hearers. See Appendix 6-B for a description.

interactional events elicit politeness evaluation? When is politeness deemed irrelevant? What are perceived as the most important characteristics of politeness? What forms can politeness evaluations take on – in terms of the terminology used? and so on" (ibid. 244-5). Eelen (ibid. 245) also stresses the importance of the study of actual (im)politeness evaluations because of the natural situational embeddedness and argumentativeness of politeness. However he recognises the difficulty of obtaining this in actual conversation because in everyday interaction people seldom verbalise their evaluation (ibid. 255). Eelen argues that the focus must be on the discursive role and functionality of the evaluation itself.

> Because of the discursive nature of politeness, the data would also need to receive a different analytical treatment from traditional investigations. Instead of cataloguing the behaviours evaluated as (im)polite, the focus would be more on the discursive role and functionality of the evaluations themselves. (ibid.)

As a methodological tool, Eelen (ibid. 256) suggests the use of "informal interviews, where the whole interview text can serve as 'data'". He argues that the interactional text of the interview as a whole can be discursively analysed as data.

Watts (2003) also claims "that the only valid object of a theory of linguistic politeness is not a hypostasised, objectified abstract term 'politeness' but rather ways in which interactants classify social, verbal acts as realising their own personal conceptualisation of what is 'polite' and what is 'impolite'" (Watts 2003:263). He (2003:262) suggests a closer focus on verbal interaction and the differential attributions of (im)politeness1 by participants. As Watts sees the linguistic expression of politeness as intricately tied up with the exercise of power, he considers the relation between power and politeness as an important research agenda, though as mentioned in Chapter 5, he tends to see power as something negotiable in emergent networks. (*Ch.5* 5.2.(b))

Mills (2004) also contests the assumptions among modern politeness theorists that politeness is the same for all groups within society. She argues that "at a

stereotypical level, politeness within English, particularly negative politeness, (which distances others and is mindful of imposing on others) is associated with white middle class women's speech (2004:174)" She also points out the mutual exclusiveness of the evaluation of what politeness constitutes between middle and working class people.

> Working class people may often see middle class linguistic behaviour as impolite because they use distancing forms (which may be interpreted as stressing class difference and power difference), and middle class people are often uncomfortable with the positive politeness norms frequent in casual conversation with strangers within the working classes which may seem to them to be overly familiar. (2004:173)

Mills (2004: 173, 184) proposes that rather than aiming to analyse politeness objectively, researchers should be aware that politeness is fundamentally a judgement of others and that stereotypes of other people's class, race and gender may impinge on both interactants' and analysts' assessments of linguistic behaviour. She (2004:172-3) also argues that B&L's universal claim that indirectness is universally more polite than directness needs to be questioned not just as showing an Anglo-centric bias but deriving from particular stereotypes of class, race and gender hidden and underlying this claim. The direction of Mills's research also clearly exhibits characteristics of *postmodern* politeness research: she has accepted a plurality of narratives regarding judgement of politeness; and she distances herself from the dominant narrative that indirectness is more polite than directness, unpacking what is in embedded in this claim.

3.2. My own proposals for future politeness studies

I will now outline my own suggestions for an agenda of politeness studies as a *postmodern* field. There are some overlaps with the proposals made by the three *postmodern* politeness theorists, which I have already indicated, but my additional contribution, I hope, will be to provide a more solid theoretical and epistemological ground for future politeness studies, drawing upon the insights I have gained from the

various theorists considered in this dissertation.

The epistemological foundation of politeness studies I propose for the future is "linguistic politeness beyond modernity" as in my dissertation title. As discussed in Chapter 3, Lyotard (1984) defines *postmodern* as the end of metanarrative, and in the *postmodern* climate, a grand narrative or metanarrative is replaced by a plurality of small narratives. After three decades of attempting to establish politeness2 or some universal principle of politeness in the politeness field, Eelen, Watts and Mills now claim that it is impossible to establish politeness2, in the recognition that evaluation of politeness is ultimately disputable and that there are heterogeneous interpretations. Though these three *postmodern* politeness researchers have not argued philosophically why they now must move back to the study of politeness1 as their object of study, probably they have experientially or intuitively recognised the impossibility of studying politeness using the *episteme*-oriented approach adopted in late modernity. What I have attempted to do throughout the thesis is to clear a path philosophically for our exploration of *postmodern* approaches to politeness, providing epistemological and theoretical backing for what Eelen, Watts and Mills have intuitively felt that they needed to do.[166]

In the movement from 'modernity' to 'beyond modernity' in this thesis, we have exorcised Cartesian Anxiety bent on finding the foundational order of the universe, which has marked modernist academic disciplines. The Cartesian assumption that the subject as the 'autonomous rational subject' can have access to neutral dispassionate knowledge from a vantage point outside the flux of history is no longer the foundation of our 'beyond modern' theory construction. Instead, the Heideggerian-Gadamarian understanding of our existence as 'being-in-the-world' reminds us that we, as historically situated beings, are part of our traditions and prejudices and that historical

[166] So far, among the three, only Watts (2005) has briefly discussed the movement toward a *postmodern* approach to politeness. He has not discussed extensively the epistemological issues.

effective consciousness and our hermeneutical situations always come into play in our understanding of the world. Upon such new epistemological foundations, what kind of agenda can I propose for future politeness studies?

First, as discussed throughout this thesis, *postmodern* politeness research will no longer attempt to establish universal, ahistorical and timeless principles. Instead *postmodern* politeness research attempts to investigate different realities of politeness rather than establishing a grand narrative.[167] As I discussed earlier, we can now see Bourdieu's and Goffman's unique sociological approaches as being *phronesis*-oriented. Each, approaching from different angles, succeeded in elucidating some aspects of politeness phenomena. Goffman's micro approaches and Bourdieu's macro approaches revealed differing narratives concerning politeness but both were elucidating some aspects of politeness, even if sometimes partially.[168] Our temptation or urge to attempt to establish one unifying universal theory or principle or 'method' comes from our *episteme*-oriented mode of thinking. However, in *phronesis*-oriented social science, just as Gadamer explained in his hermeneutical circle, we can perhaps partially grasp some aspects of politeness, although understanding the part will help us to see the whole more cogently. We must get used to this hermeneutical mode of knowing in our *phronesis*-oriented social science. The three *postmodern* politeness researchers' proposals may develop in diverse directions. For instance, from Mills's proposal,

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167 Proponents of postmodernism argue that the legitimation of particular narratives as metanarrative in modern academia has to do with the dominant view of the world. Alvesson (2002:54) states "[f]oundations and legitimating narratives have always been a hoax. They have been used (usually unknowingly) to support a dominant view of the world and its order". Foucault argues "power and knowledge directly imply one another, that there is no power relation without the correlative constitutions of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault & Gordon 1980:27). In the postmodern climate, a grand narrative or metanarrative is replaced by a plurality of small narratives. Yet among many narratives, some narratives which represent the dominant view are still more powerful than others.

168 In Bourdieu's macro approach, Bourdieu's notion of *symbolic power* behind the production and reproduction of structure through *habitus* helped us to explain hegemonic reality in politeness, where the dominant party's view tends to be normalised. However, agency's role was minimised in Bourdieu's framework. Goffman's micro perspective, on the other hand, helped us see the interplay of structure and agency from a social actor's viewpoint. Goffman ,recognised the need of plural narratives to elucidate social interaction

research unpacking different notions of what is polite according to class, race and gender may emerge. Watts's interest may lead into research on the relation between politeness and power negotiated during the interaction. Each line of research allows us to see only parts of the complexity of politeness in practice, but understanding of the part will lead to a more cogent understanding of the whole within the hermeneutical circle.

Second, as mentioned earlier, *postmodern* politeness research will involve consideration of historicity as a fundamental element. Gadamer argues that we can never be free from our prejudices (pre-judgement) and that they are preconditions of all understanding. Just as Gadamer claims that historicity is essential in human sciences, historicity is fundamental also in our *postmodern* politeness research. Both Bourdieu and Goffman recognised that our practical sense of what is appropriate is embodied history, inculcated through our socialisation process. Our cultural background and historicity inevitably play a significant part in our perception of politeness. Eelen, Watts and Mills incorporated historicity to some extent, by adopting Bourdieu's *habitus* (in spite of the alterations and modifications they have introduced to the concept), and Mills, in discussing community of practice norms, seems to acknowledge the element of 'tradition'. At the same time, neither Bourdieu and Goffman nor these three *postmodern* politeness researchers have fully recognised the depth of Gadamer's claims for historicity – our mode of being is historically effected, so our understanding is essentially a historically effected event; our prejudices and traditions are preconditions of our understanding; we can only understand from within particular hermeneutical situations.

Thirdly, as politeness involves *phronesis* – a mediation between the universal and the particular that requires deliberation and choice in each particular circumstance – all *postmodern* approaches will focus on particular practices in specific contexts as

important objects of study. For *phronesis*-oriented research, the social and historical contexts are of prime importance. Thus, we shall take small case studies very seriously, because politeness cannot be explained as simply the application of general principles to all particular practice. Eelen, Watts and Mills are also moving in this direction focusing on particular situated politeness discourses.

Fourthly, as *phronesis*-oriented study, we will recover those moral values which have been eliminated in modernist research. As mentioned in footnote 155, *phronesis* is closely related to *synesis*, which means 'empathetic understanding' or 'fellow-feeling' A person exercising *phronesis* does not think about his own situation alone but is prepared to consider the particular situation of the other person, too. Thus *phronesis* displays a practical communal character. This is different from methodological individualism, which cannot accommodate collective action or altruistic actions. This kind of empathetic understanding is needed for life in society. Aristotle points out that *phronesis* is a required virtue for political affairs. Politeness is also part of diplomatic wisdom. Goffman accommodated such elements as moral obligations, solidarity and empathy in his elucidation of interaction order. We need to recover such notions in *postmodern* politeness. Eelen, Mills and Watts do not explicitly discuss moral values. However, communal elements of politeness are evident in Watts's and Mills's understanding of politeness: Watts affirms Goffman's more communal notion of face. Mills's community of practice seems to imply that she acknowledges communal character.

Fifthly, *postmodern* politeness research could explore the interplay of power reflected in the legitimization of what is polite and in the interpretation of politeness. It is far more difficult for the less dominant to have their interpretation of what is appropriate acknowledged because what is deemed appropriate is linked with the dominant party's view of the world. In *postmodern* politeness, we could study how some

perceptions of politeness are affirmed or normalised over against others as one strand of study. Sometimes it is difficult to see the interplay of power in the actual interaction because the social order which is favourable to the dominant is perceived as normality both by the dominant and by the less dominant. Bourdieu's theory of practice can be used as a tool to elucidate such *symbolic power*.[169] Mills's interest in the issues of 'class and politeness' and 'gender and politeness' involves such interplay of power in a normalised sense of what is polite.

Sixthly and finally, as *postmodern* politeness researchers Eelen, Watts and Mills all unanimously point out, in *postmodern* politeness research we should focus on the elucidation of the Hearer's interpretation of politeness. All three theorists declared that the nature of what is polite or impolite is disputable because ultimately it depends on the Hearer's perception, interpretation and evaluation. By asserting that there are multiple evaluations of what is (im)polite, they made a *postmodern* claim. As Eelen (2001:255) rightly pointed out, in everyday interaction people seldom verbalise their evaluation. Goffman points out that we are good performers in the drama of social interaction. Even when we experience impoliteness, we often hide our reactions and perform as if nothing has occurred. As mentioned in 2.3., I think collecting Hearer's accounts of perceived negatively eventful behaviour could be a valuable source for illuminating Hearer's complex hermeneutical situations (See Appendix 6-B). Eelen's suggestion of the informal interview may be similar to my narrative approach.

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[169] I believe that reproduction of the dominant mode of expression as symbolic power happens across the historical spectrum. Through pedagogic action, people came to accept the dominant mode of expression as normality or second nature (See *Ch.4* 2.4 (b)). If I use Gadamer's language, it becomes part of their tradition. Thus legitimation of power and historicity is closely related. Similarly, I believe that the legitimation of power is intimately related to the *field* or social space. In other words, the particular hegemonic reality in any given society is locally defined. People who are socialised in different societies would not recognise that hegemonic reality. In the era of globalisation, people move around different social space with people who have a different *habitus* within different historical traditions. Historicity, power and field (social spatiality) need to be studied not separately but as in a complex dynamic interrelationship.

4. Final Remarks

This dissertation has concentrated mostly on a theoretical reconsideration of modern politeness theories (in Chapters 1, 2 and 3) and on an attempt to find alternative ways of understanding politeness, employing Bourdieu, Goffman and Gadamer as thinking tools (in Chapters 4, 5, and the Conclusion). I have only started to envisage viable post-modern politeness studies in this Conclusion, outlining possible characteristics in very general terms. It is only a preliminary consideration of what post-modern politeness studies might look like and how actual research should be carried out. All this obviously needs further consideration, and may be explored in future research. But what I hope to have established is that there are diverse approaches in *postmodern* social science to which *postmodern* politeness studies can turn for resources and for inspiration.

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Appendices

Chapter 1

Appendix 1-A

Grice's Cooperative Principle (Rules of Conversation)

The Cooperative Principle (CP) is based on Grice's (1975) claim that "[o]ur talk exchanges….are… to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or sets of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction.(1975 [1989:26])" Thus Grice has formulated "a rough general principle which participants will be expected (ceteris paribus) to observe, namely: Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged (ibid.)".

RULES OF CONVERSATION

1. Quantity:	Be as informative as required
	Be no more informative than required
2. Quality:	Say only what you believe to be true
3. Relevance:	Be relevant
4. Manner:	Be perspicuous
	Don't be ambiguous
	Don't be obscure
	Be succinct

Lakoff earlier proposed her version of 'rules of conversation' in her 1972 paper.

Rule I. What is being communicated is true.

Rule II. It is necessary to state what is being said: it is not known to other participants, or utterly obvious. Further, everything necessary for the hearer to understand the communication is present.

Rule III. Therefore, in the case of statements, the speaker assumes that the hearer will believe what he says (due to Rule I).

Rule IV. With questions, the speaker assumes that the command will be obeyed. All these assume, in addition, that the status of speaker and hearer is appropriate with respect to each other. (Of course, there are special situations in which all these are violated: lies, 'small talk', tall stories, riddles of certain types, and requests as opposed to commands. But in general these conditions define an appropriate conversational situation.) (Lakoff 1972:916)

Appendix 1-B

Halliday's three functions of language (Leech 1983:56)

a) *The ideational function:* language functioning as a means of conveying and interpreting experience of the world –subdivided into 'experiential' and 'logical' functions

b)*The interpersonal function*: language functioning as an expression of one's attitudes and an influence upon the attitudes and behaviour of the hearer

c)*The textual function*: language functioning as a means of constructing a text , i.e. a spoken or written instantiation of a language

Appendix 1-C

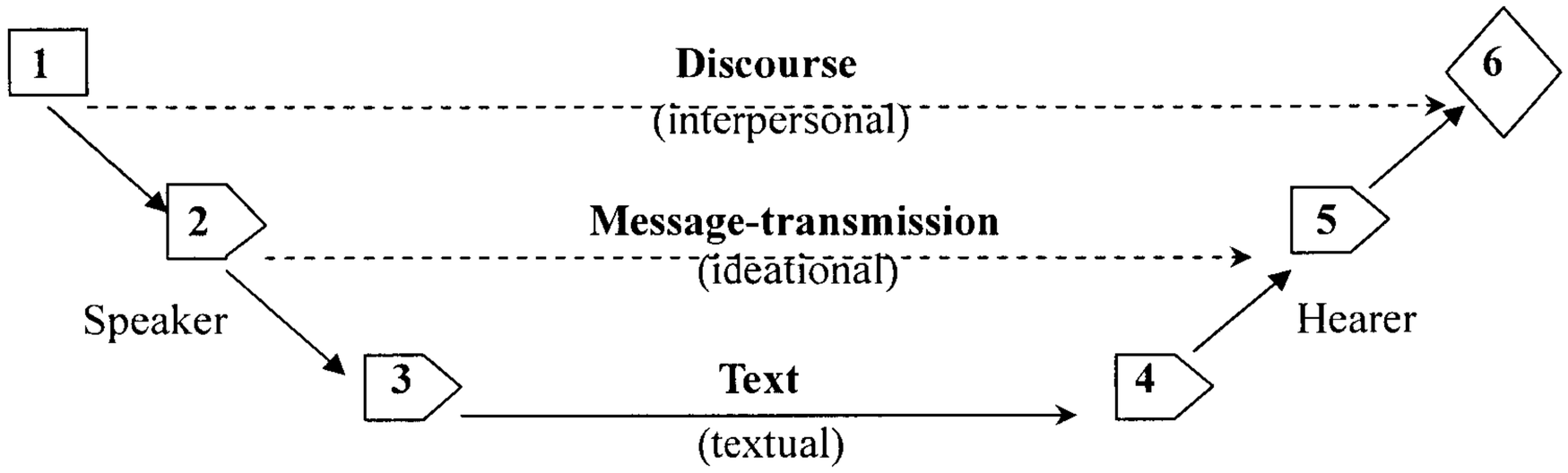

Figure 1-C. A process model of language [title not in the original] (1983:59)

In Figure 1-C, a linguistic act of communication (or an utterance) is described as constituting a transaction on three different planes as (a) interpersonal transaction (discourse), and (b) ideational transaction (message) and (c) a textual transaction (text). The ordering is as the arrows indicate: discourse includes the message and the message includes the text. Thus the whole utterance may be described as DISCOURSE by means of MESSAGE by means of TEXT.

Appendix 1-D

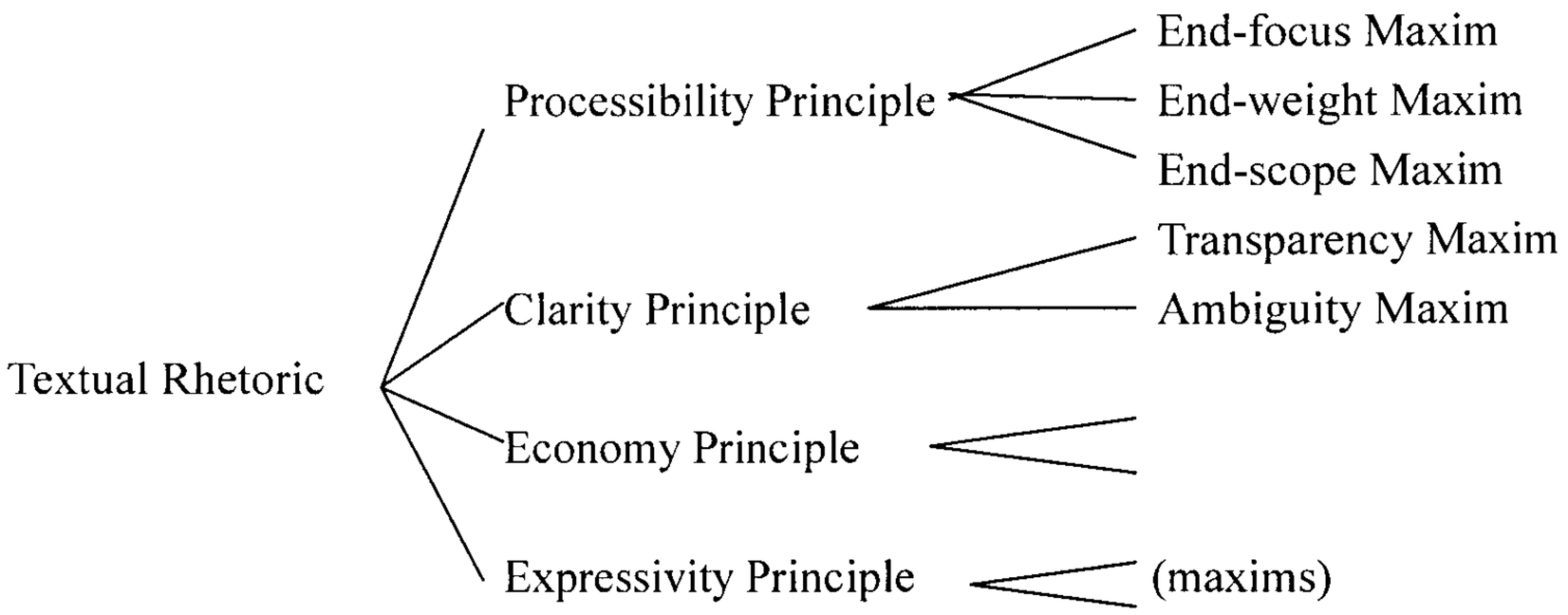

Figure 1-D Textual Rhetoric [title not in the original] (1983:16)

Appendix 1-E

Leech's adapted version of Grice's CP

Leech's (1983:8) adapted version of Grice's Cooperative Principle is as follows:

QUANTITY: Give the right amount of information: i.e.
1. Make your contribution as informative as required;
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than required

QUALITY: Try to make your contribution one that is true: i.e.
1. Do not say what you believe to be false
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence

RELATION: Be relevant

MANNER: Be perspicuous.
1. Avoid obscurity of expression
2. Avoid ambiguity
3. Be brief and (avoid unnecessary prolixity)
4. Be orderly

Appendix 1-F

Seale's categories of illocutionary acts(Leech 1983:105-6):

1. ASSERTIVES commit *S* to the truth of the expressed proposition; *e.g.* stating, suggesting, boasting, complaining. Semantically, ASSERTIVES are propositional. Such illocutions tend to be neutral as regards to politeness, *i.e.* they belong to the COLLABORATIVE category above. But there are some exceptions such as boasting which is generally considered impolite in most cultures.
2. DIRECTIVES (or IMPOSITIVES) are intended to produce some effects through action by the hearer; *e.g.* ordering, commanding, requesting, advising, recommending. They frequently belong to the COMPETITIVE category above, and therefore comprise a category of illocutions in which negative politeness is important. Some directives (such as invitations), however, are intrinsically polite. To avoid confusion in using the term 'directive' in relation to 'direct and indirect illocutions', Leech prefers the term IMPOSITIVES to refer to competitive illocutions in this class.
3. COMMISSIVES commit to some future action; *e.g.* promising, vowing, offering. These tend to be CONVIVIAL rather than competitive, being performed in the interests of someone other than the speaker.
4. EXPRESSIVES have the function of expressing or making known the speaker's psychological attitude towards a state of affairs which the illocution presupposes *e.g.* thanking, congratulating, pardoning, blaming, praising, condoling. They also tend to be CONVIVIAL, and are therefore intrinsically polite. The reverse, however, is true of such expressives as 'blaming' or 'accusing'.
5. DECLARATIVES are illocutions whose successful performance brings about a correspondence between the propositional content and reality *e.g.* resigning, dismissing, christening, naming, excommunicating, appointing, sentencing. These actions, as Searle says, are 'a very special category of speech acts': they are performed, normally speaking, by someone who is

especially authorised to do so within some institutional framework. As institutional rather than personal acts, they can scarcely be said to involve politeness.

Appendix 1-G

Leech's politeness Maxims (excluding Tact Maxims)

- **Generosity Maxim** (in impositives and comissives) (Leech 1983:133-134)

The Maxim of Tact is other-centred but the Maxim of Generosity is self-centred: a) Minimize the benefit to *self*; b) maximize cost to *self*. The following are some of Leech's examples.

(A<B indicates that B is more polite than A and † indicates that the utterance is impolite.)

1. † "You can lend me a car,"
2. "I can lend you my car." (benefit to *H* and cost to *S*)
3. "You must come and have dinner with us." (benefit to *H* and cost to *S*)
4. † "We must come and have dinner with you."
5. "Could I have some more X? " < "Is there some more X?" (reference to *S* as beneficiary is omitted)
6. "Could I borrow this electric drill?" > "Could you lend me this electric drill?"
7. "I wouldn't mind a cup of coffee." > "Could you spare me a cup of coffee?"
8. "You could borrow my bicycle, if you like." > "I could lend you my bicycle, if you like."
9. "Would you like these pencils sharpened?" > "Would you like me to sharpen these pencils?

- **Approbation Maxim** (in expressives and assertives) (Leech 1983:135-136)

The Approbation Maxim is a) Minimize dispraise of *other*; b) maximize praise of *other*. Flattery is a form of insincere approbation. This maxim says "Avoid saying unpleasant things about others and more particularly about *H.*" e.g. "What a marvellous meal you cooked!" but never † "What an awful meal you cooked!" Lack of praise could implicate dispraise. e.g. Reference letter for Mr. X who is applying for a philosophy job. "Dear Sir, Mr. X's command of English is excellent, and his attendance at tutorials has been regular. Yours, etc." (Grice 1975:52) Grice claims that this is a violation of the Maxim of Quality, but Leech (1983:136) argues that it is due to not using his Approbation Maxim.

- **Modesty Maxim** (in expressives and assertives) (Leech 1983:136-138)

The Modesty Maxim is a) Minimize praise of *self*; b) maximize dispraise of *self*. The following are some of Leech's examples.

1. A: "They were so kind to us." B: "Yes, they were, weren't they?"
2. A: "You are so kind to us." B: † "Yes, I was, wasn't I?"
3. "How stupid of me." † "How stupid of you!"
4. " † How clever of me!" "How clever of you!"
5. "Please accept this small gift as a token of our esteem." † "Please accept this

large gift as a token of our esteem."

1 and 2 show that it is felicitous to agree with another's commendation, except when it is a commendation of oneself. 3 and 4 shows that self-dispraise is regarded as benign. 5 shows the understatement of generosity. Leech (1983:137-8) gives some examples in Japanese. It is common for a Japanese to say "Ohitotsu dozo (Please [have] one)" in offering food to a guest, whereas an English-speaking host might say "Have as much as you like". The Japanese utterance makes it appear that *S* is minimising generosity. But in this case, a Japanese speaker is paying more attention to the Modesty maxim: to offer more than one is to suggest that one's food is worth eating. Similarly an English person may call his gift 'small' in giving a present as an understatement. In Japanese, there is a conventional expression: 'Tsumaranai mono desu ga... [Japanese version not in the original] (This is a gift which will be of no use to you, but...)." When offering food, a Japanese may even appear to deny the existence of the food he is offering out of modesty: "Nani mo (meshiagaru mono wa) arimasen ga, douzo. (There is nothing (to eat), but please have some.)" In these instances, the Maxim of Modesty overrules the Maxim of Quality.

Leech (1983:137-8) also mentions that when a compliment is given, many Japanese, particularly women, often insist on denying it. The Modesty Maxim is more powerful than it is as a rule in English-speaking societies where it would be customarily more polite to accept a compliment graciously. In this example in Japanese, the Modesty Maxim overrules the Agreement Maxim. English-speakers would be inclined to find some compromise between violating the Modesty Maxim and violating the Agreement Maxim. Thus there is a trade-off between different maxims of the PP.

- **Agreement Maxim** (in assertives) (Leech 1983:138)

The Agreement maxim is a) Minimize disagreement between *self* and *other*; b) maximize agreement between *self* and *other*. The following are some of Leech's examples. Disagreement is considered as impolite and agreement as polite. Partial agreement is often preferable to complete disagreement.

1. A: "It was an interesting exhibition, wasn't it?" † B: "No. It was very uninteresting." *Disagreement.*
2. A: "A referendum will satisfy everybody." B: "Yes, definitely." *Agreement*
3. A: "The book is tremendously well written." B: "Yes, well written as a whole, but there are some rather boring patches, don't you think?" *Partial agreement*

- **Sympathy Maxim** (in assertives) (Leech 1983: 139)

The Sympathy maxim is a) Minimize antipathy between *self* and *other*; b) maximize sympathy between *self* and *other*. Congratulations and condolences are courteous speech acts, even though condolences express sentiments, which might appear negative with regard to the hearer.

1. "I am terribly sorry to hear that your cat died."
2. "I am terribly sorry to hear about your cat."

2. is preferred to 1. Without information content which is unfavourable to *H*), the hearer can interpret that it is a condolence, i.e. as an expression of sympathy for misfortune.

Appendix 1-H

The Irony Principle and the Banter Principle

The Irony Principle (IP) enables a speaker to be impolite while seeming to be polite; it does so by superficially breaking the CP, but ultimately upholding it. The IP is dysfunctional; it enables the interlocutor to bypass politeness and promote an anti-social use of language. Irony varies from more comical irony to the more offensive kind. Although the IP appears to be dysfunctional, in providing a method of being offensive to others, it may well have a positive function in permitting aggression to manifest itself in a less dangerous verbal form than direct criticism, insults, threats, etc. If the Politeness Principle breaks down, it is liable to break down on both sides: direct accusation leads to counter-accusation, threat to counter-threat. But because irony pays lip service to the PP, it is less easy to break the PP in one's response to it. Hence the IP edges aggression away from the brink of conflict.

The Banter principle has the opposite effect to the Irony principle. While irony is an apparently friendly way of being offensive (mock-politeness), the type of verbal behaviour known as 'banter' is an offensive way of being friendly (mock-impoliteness). This principle might be expressed as follows: 'In order to show solidarity with *H*, say something which is (i) obviously untrue, and (ii) obviously impolite to *H* (1983:144).' The Banter Principle can be called a 'third-order principle', because it may itself exploit irony. The PP complements the CP (See 2.1.(b) in this chapter), but other principles such as the Irony and Banter Principles further supplement the maxims of the CP and the PP and help to account for the indirect relationship between sense and force (Leech 1983:149).

Appendix 1-I

First-order principles	Higher-order principles	Contributory maxims
Cooperative Principles (CP)		**Quantity, Quality** **Relation, Manner**
Politeness Principle (PP)		**Tact, Generosity** **Approbation, Modesty** **Agreement** **Sympathy** **Phatic?**
	Irony **Banter**	
Interest Principle[1] **Pollyanna Principle**[2]		

Table 1-I. Summary of the Interpersonal Rhetoric (Leech 1983:149)

[1] Interest Principle (Leech 1983:146): 'Say what is unpredictable, and hence interesting'.

[2] The Pollyanna Principle came from the too good to be true heroine of Eleanor H. Potter's novel "Pollyanna". The participants in conversation prefer pleasant topics of conversation to unpleasant one. The negative aspect of this principle is euphemism; one can disguise unpleasant subjects by referring to them by means of apparently inoffensive expressions (e.g. workers are 'made redundant' instead of being 'dismissed'). Besides such euphemistic understatement, the Pollyanna Principle produces optimistic overstatement.

Appendix 1-J

Formalists and functionalists

(a) Formalists (eg Chomsky) tend to regard language primarily as a mental phenomenon. Functionalists (eg. Halliday) tend to regard it primarily as a societal phenomenon.
(b) Formalists tend to explain linguistic universals as deriving from a common genetic linguistic inheritance of the human species. Functionalists tend to explain them as deriving from the universality of the uses to which language is put in human societies.
(c) Formalists are inclined to explain children's acquisition of language in terms of a built-in human capacity to learn language. Functionalists are inclined to explain it in terms of the development of the child's communicative needs and ability in society.
(d) Above all, formalists study language as an autonomous system, whereas functionalists study it in relation to its social function.
(Leech 1983:46)

Chapter 2

Appendix 2-A

Four way cross classification of FTA

A. Those acts that threaten H's negative face: (B&L 1987:65-66)
(i) Those acts that predicate some future act A of H, and in so doing put some pressure on H to do (or refrain from doing) the act of A:
(a) orders and requests (S indicates that he wants H to do, or refrain from doing, some act A)
(b) suggestions, advice (S indicates that he thinks H ought to (perhaps) do some act A)
(c) reminding (S indicates that H should remember to do some A)
(d) threats, warnings, dares (S indicates that he – or someone, or something – will instigate sanctions against H unless he does A)
(ii) Those acts that predicate some positive future act of S toward H, and in so doing put some pressure on H to accept or reject them, and possibly to incur a debt:
(a) offers (S indicate that he wants H to commit himself to whether or not he wants S to do some act for H, with H thereby incurring a possible debt)
(b) promises (S commits himself to a future act for H's benefit)
(iii) Those acts that predicate some desire of S toward H or H's goods, giving H reason to think that he may have to take action to protect the object of S's desire, or give it to S:
(a) compliment, expression of envy or admiration (S indicates that he likes or would like something of H's)
(b) expression of strong (negative) emotions toward H – e.g. hatred, anger, lust (S indicates possible motivation for harming H or H's goods)

B. Those acts that threaten H's positive face: (ibid. 66-67)

(i) Those acts that show that S has a negative evaluation of some aspect of H's positive face

(a) expression of disapproval, criticism, contempt, or ridicule, complaint and reprimands, accusations, insults (S indicate that he doesn't like/want one or more of H's wants, acts, personal characteristics, goods, beliefs and values)

(b) contradictions or disagreements, challenges (S indicates that he thinks H is wrong or misguided or unreasonable about some issue, such wrongness being associated with disapproval)

(ii) Those acts that show S doesn't care about H's positive face:

(a) expressions of violent (out-of-control) emotions (S gives H possible reason to fear him or be embarrassed by him)

(b) irreverence, mention of taboo topics, including those that are inappropriate in the context (S indicates that he doesn't value H's values and doesn't fear H's fears)

(c) bringing of bad news about H, or good news (boasting) about S (S indicates that he is willing to cause distress to H, and/or doesn't care about H's feelings)

(d) raising of dangerously emotional or divisive topics, e.g. politics, race, religions, women's liberation (S raises the possibility or likelihood of face-threatening acts, such as the above, occurring; i.e., S creates a dangerous-to-face atmosphere)

(e) blatant non-cooperation in an activity – e.g. disruptively interrupting H's talk, making non-sequiturs or showing non attention (S indicates that he doesn't care about H's negative- or positive-face wants)

(f) use of address terms and other status-marked identifications in initial encounters (S may misidentify H in an offensive or embarrassing way, intentionally or accidentally)

Some FTAs such as complaints, interruption, threats, strong expression of emotion, requests for personal information threaten both negative and positive face.

C. Those that offend S's negative face: (ibid. 67-68)

(a) expressing thanks (S accepts a debt, humbles his own face)

(b) acceptance of H's thanks or H's apology, (S may feel constrained to minimize H's debt or transgression, as in 'It was nothing, don't mention it.')

(c) excuses (S indicates that he thinks he had good reason to do, or fail to do, an act which H has just criticised; this may constitute in turn a criticism of H, or at least cause a confrontation between H's view of things and S's view)

(d) acceptance of offers (S is constrained to accept a debt, and to encroach upon H's negative face),

(e) responses to H's *faux pas* (if S visibly notices a prior *faux pa*s, he may cause embarrassment to H, if he pretends not to, he may be discomfited himself)

(f) Unwilling promises and offers (S commits himself to some future action although he doesn't want to; therefore, if his unwillingness shows, he may

also offend H's positive face)

D. Those that directly damage S's positive face: (ibid. 68)

(a) apologies (S indicates that he regrets doing a prior FTA, thereby damaging his own face to some degree –especially if the apology is at the same time a confession with H learning about the transgression through it, and the FTA thus conveys bad news)
(b) acceptance of a compliment (S may feel constrained to do denigrate the object of H's prior compliment, thus damaging his own face: or he may feel constrained to compliment H in turn)
(c) breakdown of physical control over body, bodily leakage, stumbling or falling down etc.
(d) self-humiliation, shuffling or cowering, acting stupid, self-contradicting,
(e) confessions, admissions of guilt or responsibility –e.g. for having done or not done an act, or for ignoring of some that S is expected to know
(f) emotion leakage, non-control of laughter or tears

Appendix 2-B

Positive politeness strategies (from Brown and Levinson 1987:103, adapted by Sifianou 1992:35)

Claim 'common ground'

1. Notice, attend to H 'his interests, wants, needs, goods)
2. Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)
3. Intensify interest to H
4. Use in-group identity markers
5. Seek agreement
6. Avoid disagreement
7. Presuppose/raise/assert common ground
8. Joke

Convey that S and H are co-operators

9. Assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concern for H'
10. Offer, promise
11. Be optimistic
12. Include both S and H in the activity
13. Give (or ask for) reasons
14. Assume or assert reciprocity

Fulfil H's want (for some X)

Give gifts to H (good, sympathy, understanding, co-operation)

Appendix 2-C

Negative politeness strategies (from Brown and Levinson 1987: 131, adapted by Sifianou 1992:35) are summarised as follows:

Be direct

1. Be conventionally indirect (clash)

Don't presume/assume

2. Question, hedge

Don't coerce H (where x involves H doing A)
(both 1. and 2. are included here, too)

3. Be pessimistic
4. Minimize the imposition
5. Give deference

Communicate S's want to not impinge on H

6. apologize
7. Impersonalize S and H: Avoid the pronouns I and you
8. State the FTA as a general rule
9. Nominalize

Redress other wants of H's, derivative from negative face

10. Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting H.

Appendix 2-D

Off record strategies (from Brown and Levinson 1987: 215)

Invite Conversational implicature, via hints triggered by violation of Gricean Maxims

Violate Relevance Maxim

1. Give hints
2. Give association clues
3. Presuppose

Violate Quantity Maxims

4. Understate
5. Overstate
6. Use tautologies

Violate Quality Maxim

7. Use contradictions
8. Be ironic
9. Use metaphors
10. Use rhetoric questions

Be vague or ambiguous

Violate Manner Maxim

11. Be ambiguous
12. Be vague
13. Over-generalize
14. Displace H

Be incomplete, use ellipsis

Chapter 4

Appendix 4-A

Watts's social model of politeness

Watts mentions that his model of (im)politeness "makes no claim to describe and/or explain what types of human social behaviour are polite, but rather to offer ways in

which we as researchers can show when, and perhaps why, individual users of language in socio-communicative verbal interaction classify utterances as polite or even express utterances politely, and to allow both politeness and impoliteness to be evaluated by individual users (Watts 2003:160)." He claims that his theory of (im)politeness can never be predictive, but it can help to open up and display social processes at work. (Watts 2003:25). Watts's model of (im)politeness consists of two major concepts:

a) *Politic behaviour*: this is related to habitus in Bourdieu's theory of practice. It accounts for the knowledge of which linguistic structures can be forecast in a specific type of interaction in a specific social field. Behaviour which is not part of the politic behaviour of an interaction type is 'inappropriate' and open to classification as 'impolite'.
b) *Linguistic politeness*: any linguistic behaviour which goes beyond the bounds of politic behaviour is open to potential classification as being 'polite', which includes potential irony, aggressiveness, abuse, etc. It is open to dispute. The imputation of politeness to linguistic structure does not automatically mean it will be given a positive evaluation. The opposite might occur.
(Watts 2003:161)

Taking Werkhofer's analogy of money further, Watts explains *politic behaviour* and *linguist politeness* as linguistic 'payment': as long as the exchange proceeds within the accepted framework of politic behaviour, the linguistic 'payment' will go largely unnoticed, but if it is not 'paid' it will certainly be noticed. Linguistic 'payment' in excess of what is required is open to interpretation as 'polite' (Watts 2003:161) .Watts elaborates on his model by adding *aggressive facework* and *supportive facework.* The diagram below that Watts provides shows how *facework*, *linguistic politeness* and *politic behaviour* are each related to one another.[3]

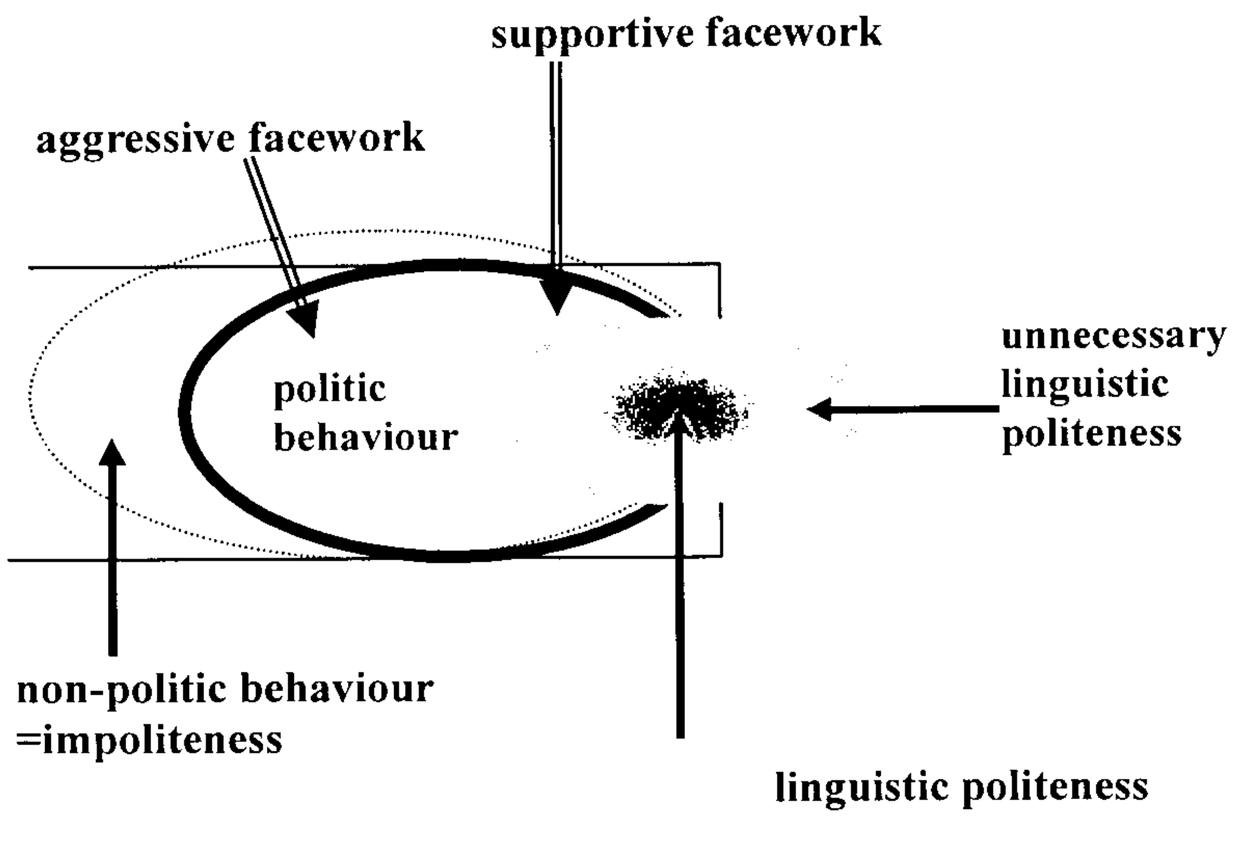

Fig. 4-A1 Facework, linguistic politeness, and politic behaviour (Watts 2003:260)

[3] Though Watts is using 'facework' in his model, he argues that "Politeness Theory can never be fully equated with Face Theory" (2003:117). Goffman's 'facework' will be discussed in chapter. 5.

The oval with the thick border around it represents the totality of forms of social practice, which can be posited as polite. **Politic behaviour** is largely predictable on the basis of the objectified social structure of the field. **Aggressive facework** in the diagram above lies on the boundaries of expected politic behaviour for the particular interaction and is highly unlikely to use linguistic structures that might be open to interpretation as polite. **Supportive facework,** on the other hand, lies closer to that arena in which linguistic behaviour might (but need not) be associated with potentially polite behaviour. Outside the borders of politic behaviour, on the left we have **non-politic behaviour** that is unsanctioned. The shaded oval indicates the zone in which it is disputable whether verbal structures of politic behaviour are interpretable as polite or not. The closer we get to the centre of the oval, the more likely it will be that the utterance will go beyond the payment that is regarded as obligatory for politic behaviour. Some polite behaviour lies beyond the border of what is politic, and although it might appear superficially polite, it will almost certainly be evaluated negatively (**unnecessary linguistic politeness**). (Watts 2003:259-60)

In 2005 papers, Watts develops his model of politeness further. He contrasts modernist and postmodernist theory and presents his model as a postmodernist theory. Watts (2005:xlii) wrote:

> A modernist theory tends to isolate language from the set of language users, even in speech act theory and Gricean pragmatics, and it leads to a denaturalisation of language. A postmodernist theory starts from the assumption that language is within the individual as a social being and therefore that talk instantiates social interaction… Through discourse in social interaction we create common worlds, the most significant being our interpersonal relationships with others.

As a postmodernist conceptualisation of politeness, he proposes his 'relational work'[4], (Watts 2005; Locher and Watts 2005), i.e. the work "individuals invest in negotiating relationships with others, which includes impolite as well as polite or merely appropriate behaviour" (Locher and Watts 2005:9). Figure 4-A2 is Watts's new attempt to represent the total spectrum of his 'relational work' in diagrammatic form.

When behaviour is unmarked, i.e. in a state of equilibrium, he calls this 'politic/appropriate' behaviour, which he labels 'non-polite'. The dotted line separating 'unmarked politic behaviour' from 'positively marked politic behaviour' that is open to interpretation as 'polite' shows that the boundary between the two is not absolute. It is a moveable area in which one type of behaviour shades off into the other. The point at which speakers perceive politic behaviour to be 'polite' may vary considerably from speaker to speaker, from one situational context to another. When the relational work in interaction is unmarked and goes unnoticed, it would be a 'politic' behaviour, which is a sort of equilibrium. Positively marked behaviour is open to an overt interpretation as 'polite'. Negatively marked behaviours may be interpreted as 'over-polite' (right), 'rude' or 'impolite' (left) (Watts 2005:xliii).

[4] Eelen was already using 'relational work' in his 2003 book..

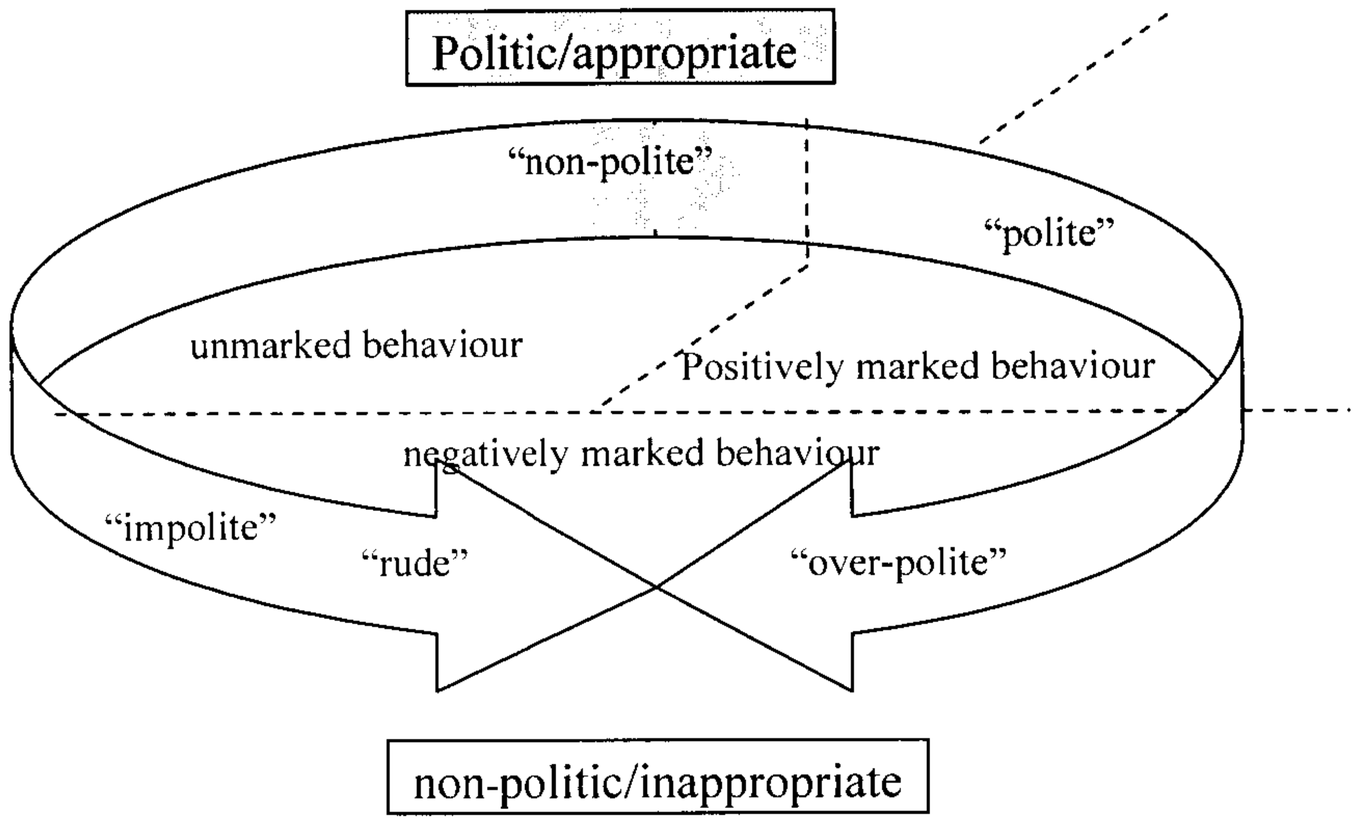

Fig. 4-A2 Watts's 'relational work' (2005: xliii)

Appendix 4-B

Giddens's structuration theory

Giddens's structuration theory was first developed in the late 1970s in *New Rules of Sociological Method* (1976) and *Central Problems in Social Theory* (1979) and subsequently in more complete form in *The Constitution of Society* (1984). (King 2005:218) Giddens redefines basic concepts such as agent, action, power, structure and system in order to create the foundation for a new social ontology. Giddens develops and redefines these concepts so that the traditional actor/structure dualism is instead conceived as *duality.* Society is viewed as a *structuration process*, whereby human actions simultaneously structure and are structured by society. Giddens (1984:25) writes: "[t]he constitution of agent and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, but represents a duality. According to the notion of the duality of the structure, the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize. Structure is not 'external' to individuals: as memory traces, and as instantiated in social practices, it is in a certain sense more 'internal' than exterior to their activities in a Durkheim sense. Structure is not to be equated with constraints but is always both constraining and enabling." "Structure has no existence independent of the knowledge that agent have about what they do in their day-to-day activity (ibid. 26)". "The social system in which structure is recursively implicated…. Giddens tries to explain the active reproduction of the social system through agent's knowledgeability. For further details, see Giddens *The Constitution of Society* (1984)

I summarise how Giddens tried to overcome the structure/agency dilemma as follows: Giddens, unlike Bourdieu, emphasises the agent's knowledgability in his way of overcoming the structure/agency dilemma: "All human beings are knowledgeable agents. That is to say, all social actors know a great deal about the conditions and consequences of what they do in their day-to-day lives. Such knowledge is not wholly

propositional in character, nor is it incidental to their activities" (Giddens 1984:281). Such knowledge is expressed as 'practical consciousnesses', 'discursive consciousness' and 'unconscious motives'.[5] Knowledgeability embedded in practical consciousness exhibits an extraordinary complexity." The predominant form of day-to-day social activity is routine, which is not directly motivated but merely the repetition of everyday, mundane activities and such repetition of activities by individuals result in reproduction in society.

Giddens (1984:282) explains the connection of routines and ontological security: "Routinized practices are the prime expression of the duality of structure in respect of the continuity of social life. In the enactment of routines agents sustain a sense of ontological security".[6] Through what Giddens calls, the 'reflexive monitoring of actions', Giddens can explain *transformation* as well as *reproduction*. The 'reflexive monitoring of action' refers to the intentional or purposive character of human behaviour. Parker (2000:60) shows how Giddens's agents have freedom to bring changes: "Reflexive monitoring involves evaluation, critical appraisal and comparison of rules and resources; Giddens's agents can learn from mistakes and appropriate useful knowledge whenever they find it."

Chapter 5

Appendix 5-A

Multiple roles that a 40 year-old primary school teacher plays

Japanese change the words used to address persons depending on the roles that the person takes in different situations. Suzuki (1973) gives an interesting example of a 40 year-old primary school teacher's position as shown in the diagram on the next page.

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[5] Kaspersen (2000) lucidly explains three levels of Giddens's 'knowledgeable agent'. The majority of our day-to-day activities are routinized and automatic and they take place at the level of ***practical consciousness***. The vast majority of our activities such as getting up, brushing teeth, taking a shower are **routinized**, (which have almost ritual character). The knowledge of these actions is seldom formulated explicitly. It is a tacit knowledge. Practical consciousness then comprises the non-discursive framework of cultural competencies necessary for a social act. Whereas the level of ***practical consciousness*** encompasses the knowledge for which we cannot immediately account, ***discursive consciousness*** refers to the understanding or knowledge which the agent achieves by reflecting upon his/her actions. In other words, we explicitly express our activity. (e.g. "I like biking because I am opposed to automobile pollution."). However, not all motives for actions can be found at the conscious level. ***Unconscious motives***, tied to memory, operate below the non-discursive level as an indirect motivation for action and belief. Out of the three levels, Giddens claims that the critical level is *practical consciousness*, because we generally experience our social activities as the continuous flow of conduct and not a series of rationally cognised discrete acts (Kaspersen 2000:35).

[6] Ontological security is defined as "[c]onfidence or trust that the natural and social worlds are as they appear to be, including the basic existential parameters of self and social identity (Giddens 1984:375)".

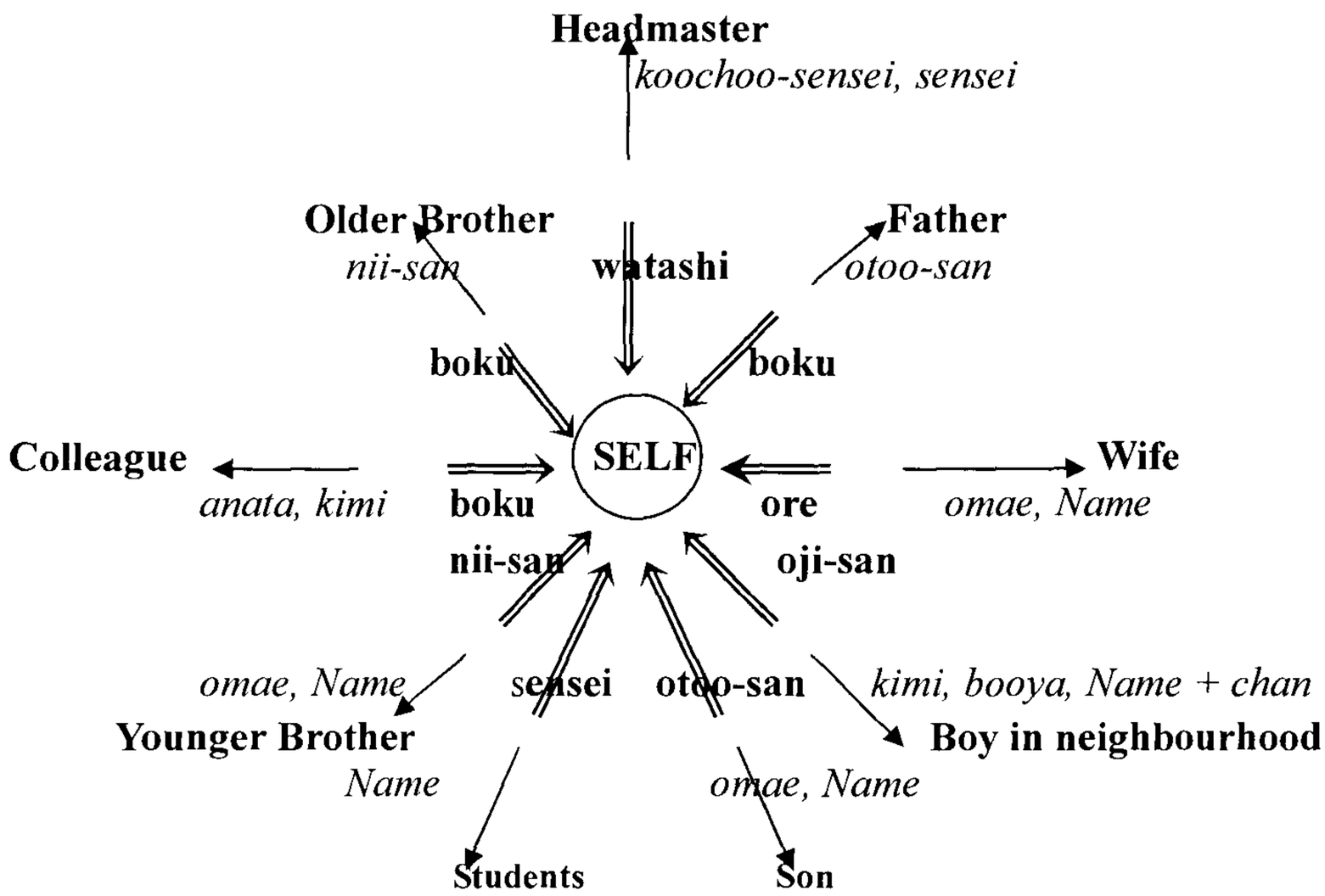

Fig.5-A different roles and terms for addressing people (Suzuki 1973:148)

Words beside the single line arrows (*in Italics*) indicate how this person addresses different people with whom he is in relationship: headmaster, his father, wife, older brother, younger brother, son, students, colleague, students and a boy in neighbourhood. Words beside the double line arrows (**in bold**) shows how he speaks about or addresses himself when he talks to these different people.

Watashi, boku, ore are all variations of "I" the first person singular pronoun. *Watashi* is a semi-formal version of "I", which he uses when he talks with his superior, the headmaster of his school. *Boku* is a casual variation of "I" which is often used by young boys and male adults in informal situations. He uses this "I" toward his father, his colleague, and to his older brother. However, to his wife, he uses *ore* a rather bossy male ('macho') variation of "I". On other occasions, he refers to himself with his role names rather than "I". For instance, to his younger brother, he addresses himself as *niisan* (your older bother); to his son as *otoo-san* (your father); to his students as *sensei* (your teacher) and to his neighbour boy as *oji-san* (your neighbour uncle). Such explicit indication of particular roles and status entitlements in ordinary interaction in Japanese language reveals that the Japanese man must constantly be reassessing his roles in relation to others with whom he is in contact. Brown and Gilman (1960) have analysed the T/V system of European languages and concluded that *power* and *solidarity* are the parameters in distinguishing these pronoun variations. Japanese address terms convey something much more complicated than power and solidarity. Various connotations are

implied by this range of terms of address.[7] The variety of terms of address for this 40 year-old primary school teacher shows how diverse are the roles he has to take in performance with different team-mates, headmaster, colleagues, students, wife, younger and older brother, son and boy in the neighbourhood.

Appendix 5-B

Other moral obligations of team members

- ***Dramaturgical discipline:***

each member of the team must also possess *dramaturgical discipline* and exercise it in presenting his/her own part: "while the performer is ostensibly immersed and given over to the activity that he is performing and is apparently engrossed in his actions in a spontaneous, uncalculating way, he must nonetheless be affectively dissociated from his presentation in a way that leaves him free to cope with dramaturgical contingencies as they arise" (1990[1959]:210). The dramaturgically disciplined performer is someone with 'self-control' who can suppress his/her spontaneous feelings in order to give the appearance of sticking to the affective line. Goffman (1990[1959]:210-1) lists other attributes of a performer who is dramaturgically disciplined: "someone who remembers his part and does not commit unmeant gestures or *faux pa*s in performing it", "someone with discretion; he does not give the show away by involuntary disclosing its secret", "someone with 'presence of mind' who can cover up on the spur of the moment for inappropriate behaviour on the part of his team-mate, while maintaining the impression that he is merely playing his part." Management of one's face and voice is also an important element of dramaturgical discipline. For successful impression management of performers, it is vital that team-mates are dramaturgically disciplined. Undisciplined behaviour may be judged as impolite and cause embarrassment to other team members.

- ***dramaturgical circumspection***

Goffman claims that besides *loyalty* and *discipline*, *dramaturgical circumspection* must be exercised (1990[1959]:212): the members of the team should exercise foresight and design in advance how best to stage a show, preparing in advance for likely contingencies and exploiting the opportunities that remain. One technique may be to choose members who are loyal and disciplined, and if possible also attempt to select the kind of audience that will give a minimum of trouble in terms of the show that performer wants to put on. (1990[1959]:213). Even if teams select the right team-mates and right audience, when they come into each other's immediate presence, a host of minor events may occur that might accidentally convey an impression that is inconsistent with the fostered one. Thus they should always prepare in advance for all possible expressive contingences. (1990[1959]:213)

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[7] **Self "I":** *watashi* (standard, semiformal); *watakushi* (formal): *atashi* (used by woman); *boku* (male; boy); *ore* (rough; male; toward someone equal or lower in status); *wagahai* (man; pompous); *jibun* (male; old military) Other variations are *oira*, *uchi*, *washi*, *asshi, ore-sama.*

"You"(singular): *anata* (toward someone equal or lower in status; wife calling husband); *omae* (rough; used by male toward someone lower in status; husband calling wife); *kimi* (used by male; to someone lower in status); *temee* (very rough; used by male); *kisama* (very rough; used by male) Other variations are *anta, omee.*

"You"(plural): *anata-tachi / anata-gata* (used toward those who are lower in status; often by teacher toward students); *kimi-tachi* (used by male toward those who are lower in status); *omae-tachi* (rough; toward those who are lower in status):*omae-ra* (very rough; toward those who are lower in status) Other variations are *anta-tachi, anta-ra, temee-ra.*

Appendix 5-C

Goffman in Watt's social model of politeness

Watts (2003:130) sees that politeness and impoliteness are part of the construction and management of everyday life and considers the individual's development of a concept of self is the most important part, which can only occur through the medium of socio-communicative interaction. He labels this concept of self *face* and suggests that it can be only developed through repeated socio-communicative verbal interaction with others and "the construction of our own concept of self and the work we do in social interaction to enable others to construct, reproduce and maintain their self-concepts" (2003:130) he calls *facework*. He claims that all human social interaction consists of facework of one kind or another and that linguistic politeness is one of its aspects.

Watts (2003:259) argues that "we can be assigned different faces on different occasions of verbal interaction" and that "all social interaction is predicted on individuals' face needs. i.e. that we can never get away from negotiating facework". Some interaction type allows for facework which aims at damaging or destroying the face which has been attributed to a participant. If the interaction sanctions the display of face threat he calls it *aggressive facework*. If the interaction requires particular care not to damage another participant's face, the participants do everything to circumvent face threat, he calls it *supportive facework*. (ibid.) Watts gives a more detailed explanation of *supportive work*:

> When one of the interactants is about to fall out of line or immediately after s/he has fallen out of line, that interactant may take measures to indicate to the other participants that the overall attribution of face for the interaction is still valid. This is what can be called *supportive facework*, supportive because it contributes towards the overall facework of the interaction. (Watts 2003:132)

Watts (2003:260) made a diagram showing where 'politic behaviour' and 'linguistic politeness' and 'impoliteness' is placed in relation to *supportive facework* and *aggressive facework*, (See Appendix 4-A) but he presented another diagram in 2005 (Fig 4-A2 in Appendix 4-A), in which the notions of *supportive* and *aggressive facework* are no longer used. I find Watts's notions of 'face' and 'facework' is largely compatible with Goffman's original notions of 'face' and 'facework'. Watts's main concern seems to be how some behaviour is interpreted as 'polite', 'not polite', 'politic' or 'impolite', while Goffman seems to be more interested in the ways participants engage in interpersonal ritual behaviour. Goffman's notions of 'face' and 'face-work' were theoretical tools that he employed for elucidating such interaction ritual.

Conclusion

Appendix 6-A

Prejudice and the Enlightenment

"The history of ideas shows that not until the Enlightenment does the concept of prejudice acquire the negative connotation familiar today. Actually "prejudice" means a judgment that is rendered before all the elements that determine a situation have been

finally examined. In German legal terminology a "prejudice" is a provisional legal verdict before the final verdict is reached. For someone involved in a legal dispute, this kind of judgment against him affects his chances adversely. Accordingly, the French préjudice as well as the Latin praejudicium, means simply "adverse effect" "disadvantage", "harm". But this negative sense is only derivative. The negative consequence depends precisely on the positive validity, the value of the provisional decision as a prejudgment, like that of any precedent. Thus "prejudice" certainly does not necessarily mean a false judgment, but part of the idea that it can have either a positive or a negative value." (Gadamer 2004: 273)

Appendix 6-B

Negatively eventful behaviour: 'How much did you pay for the flat?'

The following vignette is part of my own recent personal experience. How would you feel if someone you had never met before asked you "How much did you pay for your flat" in front of a whole group of people? I was invited by a Hong Kong Chinese friend Cathy to go to a *dim sum* lunch at a Chinese restaurant, eight of us all together. Most of us were from our hall of residence apart from a Hong Kong businessman and his wife that Cathy had invited. Cathy, who had invited us all, congratulated Nadia, a South African lawyer, who had just bought a flat of her own. Then the Hong Kong businessman who was there, previously unknown to Nadia suddenly said, 'How much did you pay for the flat?' At that point, everybody looked uncomfortable and tried to change the topic. Then Cathy stepped in and said 'It is such a difficult question'. We all thought that she was trying to avoid the question, but to our surprise, Cathy said. "Why don't you ask how much she has to pay per month?" Everybody was silent. Eventually we changed the topic and Nadia did not have to answer the question.

It seemed to me quite rude and improper to ask this question of somebody met for the first time in front of a whole group of strangers. Clearly this businessman did not perceive it as being out of place. But I and several others thought it quite improper.

Later, I had opportunity to ask how other people felt about the Hong Kong businessman's rather crude question. I asked three friends, one Singaporean and two South African friends to express how they thought about this Hong Kong businessman's question. Though these were not intended as data, I actually recorded the conversation. Below are excerpts from my conversation with two South Africans, Clare and David. (Clare describes herself as a coloured South African and David of Italian descent describes himself as a white South African in this brief vignette.) I report on just two short segments of our conversation.

(1)

Clare: Yap! I I ..I would think it wouldn't be. polite then again it would seem… a person's level of politeness depend on your socialization.. ↗ your country, ↗ for example, for example, I come from a culture where you know everything is…everybody is trying to (inaudible). because we emerge from such a segregated society.

Noriko: mmm

Clare: and everybody wants to be politically correct, so we are being oversensitive by

perceiving that to be just impolite, we are proposing opposition to political incorrectness. It's rather a big thing. You know..Just such a question..opens..... a question ..I don't perceive that just to be.. just to be impolite.

David: But in South Africa first of all…

Clare: In South Africa, we might NOT, We ...(indaudible)

Noriko: So in the climate of South Africa, it would be inappropriate. but do YOU you yourself you yourself…would you ask such a question?

Clare: NOoo…, because as I was saying to you. I would consider that to be rude, lacking… Yeah rude…beyond being impolite, just being .rude… but I am saying that me perceiving it to be impolite is influenced perhaps by by my socialization. ↗ by my cultural history, by that I mean..ehm. because as I'm saying to you, we've emerged from such a segregated…from such segregated communities you know maybe…we've been oversensitive in terms of what is seen polite and impolite.

(2)

Clare: But also I think you know… if you had asked the question probably TEN YEARS ago (inaudible)….it would have made a difference, because NOW… post…post-Apartheid...

David: Ummm mm

Clare: You know…that type of… you wouldn't ask that type of question, because…I think people nowadays back home, we come from ah..more politically correct, they don't Want to ask.. and to be perceived, because if if ..if if David from white descent, of white descent, ask me that question, I would like to ask Myself…. "Why would he ask me that for, giving me that type of question?"

Noriko: you mean ..that.. I'd think why can a white person ask me that ↗

Clare: YEAAAH.

David: AND even…a Black person asking another black person…could be

Clare: Yeah….

David: Let' say…you're from a LOW-class eh POOR black eh community and you ask someone who…had benefited from black empowerment....

Clare: OH yeah.

David: we have SUCH a wealthy Middle class even in that community, and that... I think it would leave the black person dismayed…if it was asked by maybe someone who used to be in the same community but he's still in the poor position

Interestingly, as you can see from above, when these people evaluate the Hong Kong businessman's question, both Clare and David mentioned various matters related to the culture and society they come from such as the political history, cultural history, class and racial issues in present day South Africa (see underlined parts). In fact, rather than

the immediate contextual situation of the actual conversation itself, they introduced their own cultural history and tradition and preunderstanding into their interpretation and evaluation of the utterance as more crucial factors. I can see that these are all part of their hermeneutical situation, from which they interpreted and evaluated the Hong Kong businessman's question.

This account shows that what goes on in the Hearer's interpretation of utterances truly involves history, tradition and prejudgment (prejudices) of the Hearer as Gadamer suggested. Only from their own hermeneutical situations, could these people interpret the Hong Kong businessman, because these historical situations are part of their existence. A narrative approach seems to be one way to have some access to the complex hermeneutical conditions of the Hearer.